WOMEN UNDER PRIMITIVE BUDDHISM

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LAYWOMEN AND ALMSWOMEN

by
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AND

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

V. = Vinaya Piṭaka.
MV. = Mahāvagga. (Vinaya.)
CV. = Cullavagga. (Vinaya.)
Majjhima = Majjhima Nikāya.
Saṃy. Nik. = Saṃyutta-Nikāya.
Ang. = Anguttara-Nikāya.
Dhp. = Dhammapada.
Dhp. Cm̄y. = Dhammadpada Commentary.
Mhp. = Mahāparinibbāna Suttanta.

C.H.I. = Cambridge History of India.
E.R.E. = Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics.
J.P.T.S. = *Journal of the Pāli Text Society.*
S.B.E. = Sacred Books of the East.

PRONUNCIATION

In Pāli the vowels are the same as in Italian, except the short *a* which has the sound of *u* in *but*. The consonants are mostly as in English : *g* is always hard, *c* is always *ch* ; for example, Cālā, Paṭācārā are pronounced Chālā, Paṭāchārā

PREFATORY NOTE

THE subject of this book was proposed to me by Mrs. Rhys Davids. I should like to express my deep gratitude to her for her invaluable suggestions, criticism and help, and for her constant interest throughout the progress of this work. It has been carried out in most pleasant conditions at Newnham College, and with the kindest encouragement from those in authority.

I am also indebted to the Council of Bedford College for their generous permission to reproduce the statue of Gotama the Buddha which appears as the frontispiece of this volume. This beautiful statue, a part of the late Lady Herringham's Collection, is now in the Library of Bedford College.

The photographs facing pages 222 and 283 were given me by Dr. Andreas Nell, of Kandy. He has also supplied me with some notes about the life of present-day nuns in Ceylon. Others were sent me by Mrs. Kularatne, of Colombo. Through the interest of Professor G. H. Luce of the University of Rangoon, I have been enabled to incorporate various details of the life of present-day nuns in Burma. To these three friends I am much indebted.

I have also been greatly assisted by Mrs. Archer-Hind, who has bestowed much careful attention upon reading the proofs.

I. B. H.

PREFACE

THE author has asked me to give my blessing to her maiden effort in the field of India's religious history, and I give it very whole-heartedly. Much has she put into the modest compass of her book—a much which is more than has yet come into the hands of English readers—on the subject of women's needs and aspirations and accomplishment in the centuries covered by her title. Especially do I commend her treatment of woman's life, there and during that time, as a whole, and not merely that life as given to "religion." The latter loses balance and proportion if considered apart from the former. We must see what women left, and why they left, if we would justly value what they gained, or at least deemed they would gain, in the new departure—it was relatively new—of, as it was called, going forth. To present a coherent living picture of the life in the world of the woman, who saw the inception of the New Word, now known as Buddhism, was no easy task, and much worthy and fruitful labour has it entailed. In the records of women who had joined the Order, we see woman become articulate about herself and her life. She had, as to all social ends, all domestic interests become not woman, but *homo*. The home life made plenty of claim upon body and mind, but not upon her mind as medium of self-expression. It was in this unwonted channel that she expanded, side by side with men, as religieuse; and the Anthology, in which some of this self-articulation is collected, is a treasure unique perhaps in literature.

One thing I would have the reader bear in mind, and that is that the records, in Vinaya, Sutta and

Anthology, of the religious, whether we call her almswoman, sister or nun, extend in all probability over quite a long period of time. There are references, almost certainly true, to women contemporary with Gotama the Founder, such as his aunt and stepmother Pajāpatī, and Visākhā the generous patroness. And there are poems by nuns who may well have been contemporary with King Asoka. This means a period of about three hundred years. Now during that long time there was room for much evolution; but this is the phase in it to which alone I would draw attention: room enough for what began, as solely a call to mission work, to develop into a field offering various opportunities for women having various needs and aspirations to satisfy these. In publishing just twenty years ago a translation of the Anthology, I drew up a table of such satisfactions as the authoresses seemed to have found. Perhaps therein I allowed too little for sheer play of imagination. An almswoman could be as temperamental as her lay-sister. But there were two aspirations of outstanding interest distinguishing this Anthology from that of the men—liberty or emancipation (*vimutti*), and the expansion of her essential nature as human being apart from her femininity. The author has considered both these phases, and I only mention them here to throw into greater relief that which the inception of the Sakyan (Buddhist) movement meant for the first woman disciples of the Order, as distinct from that which the religious career *came to mean* for women.

As disciples of, and as co-workers with the first Sakyans, the first woman-members would both have the eager will to help the many, and would find themselves involved in that work, and in nothing else. We should think of them as we do of those first disciples round Jesus, and of the Marys. I am not claiming that women were admitted in the first few years; they could not well be, till some sort of " settlement" had been formed. (The orthodox account of Pajāpatī and her companions seeking admission is probably by no means the real first entry of women.) But neither should we think of the first women coming in to gain this or that advantage in life from being in the Community. A world-religion does not make its start in that way. That way belongs to the well-established thing. Ask any great movement of religious work in our own day whether that is not so.

What, then, was the work of the few who, to ward, to mother the Many needing the New Word for which the hour had come, joined the Sakyans? Theirs it was to teach a Mandate which, under the figure of a Way and Wayfaring through many worlds, held up —shall I say it so?—two supreme teachings. These were the *importance* in the matter of man's safety, *i.e.* salvation, of the good or moral life; and that the supreme authority in the matter of choosing that way to safety lay within the very self of each man. The best-established teaching of the day taught that in man's nature the Highest, the Best, the Divine was enshrined. The new teaching of the Sakyans showed that man could become More like this potential Most within him by following Its *urge within him:* the monitor we now call conscience, but which they taught as *dhamma*.

It was this that those first women missioners were, with their brother missioners, concerned to win opportunity to spend themselves about; it was for this that the really worthy among them wanted "liberty," this for which they valued liberty. We might call this "educating the souls" of the Many; in India they called it "realising the Man (*purusha*, *attā*, *satta*)." And if we would bear this in mind, and put aside our Western movements of to-day, what light does it not throw, for instance, on the remarkable verses of Somā, said to be a daughter of the chaplain of Gotama's first patron, Bimbisāra, the King of Magadha:

"What should the woman-nature count for us, in her who with mind well set, and knowledge advancing, has right insight into *dhamma*? To one for whom the question arises, 'Am I a woman in these matters, or am I a man, or what then am I?' such as are you, you evil one, are fit to talk." Here is no question of sex equality; here is the very Man beneath or above sex; it is the very soul of the woman, as of the man, with whom she is concerned. But we, reading our own day into the lines, see in them the new woman, dissociating herself from sex-aspect, and calling on man to do so also. I would give much of the Therigāthā in exchange for more lines by Somā!

If indeed, as seems probable, she was a contemporary of Gotama, we can note that she used the word *dhamma* as he would have approved, namely as the "voice" of the very Deity immanent in the man; and hence as That Whose mandate the man "should hold in highest reverence" (*Kindred Sayings*, i., 175 f.). This utterance is associated with his earliest teaching, and albeit it is so edited as to be mixed up with much later systematised technics of doctrine, it dates from a day when there was no formulated code of teaching in existence among the Sakyans which could be meant by the term *dhamma*. But Buddhists have come to mean just this externalised body of monitions, etc., in the term. And we endorse that ecclesiastical view by speaking of "*the* Dhamma," which is as if we were to say "the conscience," "the duty." For Somā, in a day of outgrown personalised concepts of Deity, right insight into *dhamma* would mean, that "advance (in the Way)" was made when the man chose (wayfared) as that Voice of the Highest within him bade. She was teaching, not the development of the woman as such, but the more in growth of the divine germ who was she.

Thus it is with the utterance of this New Word that she was preoccupied. And not Somā the nun only. Much and fluent self-expression in what was then a new outlook is not to be looked for in sayings ascribed to the women, even when repeater and editor recorded loyally. But that mother of her world, Visākhā, was also envisaging this New Word as a "making to grow within herself" of what was there, as we say, potentially. "Let me make this gift to the Community," she said to the Founder; "it will be in me a source of becoming (*lit.* a making to become: *bhāvanā*) in moral and spiritual growth (*Vinaya*, Mhv. viii., 15, 13)." Such will have been the "Ariyan growth" (*vaḍḍhi*) commended in the woman, in a little known Sutta (*Kindred Sayings*, iv., 168).

Neither of these two elect women talks about the "saving" of others. The one states in a general way what is true for her; the other expresses chief interest in her own spiritual growth. Their own lives were the best testimony to their mothering of others. And anyway it was, and still is, Indian to make one's own salvation the explicit quest. But if we compare with these women of the reticence in word that pattern of what K. E. Neumann called "the incorrigible recluse in men," Sumedhā, we see, expanded with fervour, poetic art and a very flood of words, the *one ideal of escape for herself* from the world—in other words, from duty present and impending. Here, if you will, is "emancipation," but it is not the sublime freedom of Becoming in the Man, the Spirit, of Somā's lines. Sumedhā, it is true, may have used her strong will to riddance from duty, after she had

. . . thus her mind
Declaring, dropped her tresses on the floor,

in the higher educational work, for which she certainly had great aptitude of a sort. I would be the last to think of her save with respect. She was not to blame for the monastic machine which, in working the spread of the original teaching, had transformed it out of almost all semblance to what that was, any more than was Catherine of Siena to blame for a similar distorting vehicle of her later day. The parallel is not to be pressed, yet it is not as present as it might be to some of to-day's religieux. Seventeen years ago I was standing before the painting in Catherine's old Siena home, where she, too, is cutting off her "tresses," and dropping them on the floor, like Sumedhā, in defiance of her parents' wishes. And to an Italian priest, also looking, I commented in, I fear, poor Italian on the early parallel in the Buddhist nun. But he, with an almost malignant gesture of repulsion, snapped out: " Ah, they were no true nuns," and strode away.

This book has been undertaken and brought to birth in a very opposite spirit to anything so murky as that. In it we read of women of sincere aspirations and earnest will seeking the More, the Better, in life, whether they mothered the world in the home, or mothered it in the " homeless " to which they went forth. The new spirit has largely outgrown the idea, that the career of a recluse is the best way either to save one's self or to develop the mandate of a New Word. But that such a book as this has come to birth, and will find appreciative readers, is a hopeful sign that my young priest is no measure of the world's expanding sympathy with the forward efforts of women, whenever and wherever found.

C. A. F. RHYS DAVIDS.

INTRODUCTION

IN the West the study of Buddhism on historical lines is comparatively new. The interest of Western scholars in this subject was first awakened through Sanskrit and Chinese writings which, it has since been ascertained, depict a derived and divergent form of Buddhism, its primitive characteristics often absent or barely recognisable. The original literature of the Buddhists, the Pāli manuscripts, on which the Sanskrit and Chinese versions are founded, did not become accessible until after the latter had been mastered, and false conceptions had been established by them.

With the transliteration and translation of the Pāli manuscripts, begun several decades ago, but not yet complete, a new and more accurate view of Buddhism has been presented.

The texts fall into two groups, called by Western scholars (1) the Canonical, supposed to have been edited by the decree of the first Council held after Gotama's death; (2) the post-Canonical, edited later. Yet even this material, which is considerable, contains various inherent obstacles to strict accuracy. In the first place nothing was written down for at least two hundred years, and probably more, after Gotama died. Although writing was not unknown during his lifetime, it was not used for sacred purposes. No suitable material had been found on which to write, for the date-palm, which served the purpose best, did not grow plentifully in the Middle Country.[1] Hence the oral transmission of learning was the traditional mode in India. Yet this manner of preserving the teaching and discipline was probably not a more reliable way of excluding later interpolations than was transmission by hand-writing. The memory of the repeaters of the rules was most likely not infallible, and the difficulty of having to remember prose sayings and dicta did not lighten their task. Most probably only certain members of the Brahmin caste were endowed with the marvellous memory so often erroneously attributed to all Orientals; and the poetry of the Vedas, which it was their business to memorise and transmit, was easier to master than the prose of Gotama's doctrine and discipline.

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[1] V., iv., p. 305; *cf. Vinaya Translation*, vol. i., introduction, p. xxxiii. For the beginning and development of writing, see Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, London, 1903, p. 107 ff.

Another force disruptive of the purity of the original canon was lodged in the followers of Gotama. They, also, were teachers, and not merely passive, docile disciples. They would not necessarily hand on the teaching of the Master exactly as they had received it from him, but would now and again change words in order to emphasise the special points which appealed to them. Although there was no intrinsic reason why they should not do this, they were always careful to give weight to new rules by referring them back to the Lord. In these ways alterations would creep in and inconsistencies arise.

Still another inherent difficulty in dealing with the Pāli texts arises from the various editions, glosses, and revisions which they have undergone at the hands of the monks. In consequence it is sometimes impossible to disentangle the original matter from later accretions; and in many places it appears as if much of what Gotama thought, said, and did has become lost or distorted. If the monk-factor be kept in mind, some of the distortion may be accounted for, and in part rectified. It partially explains the views, more favourable to monkdom than to lay-life, more favourable to men than to women, which are usually ascribed to

Gotama. It also partially explains the absence of a connected account of some of the important events of his lifetime.

The following survey is an attempt to fill up one of these *lacunæ*, and to present the position of the laywomen and of the almswomen in historical focus. The material for the study of the laywomen has been gathered from the Canonical literature, and also from the (later) Commentaries, the Jātaka books and the Milindapañha. Most of the material for the account of the almswomen is to be found in the Vinaya-Piṭaka, one of the oldest Buddhist books in existence, and particularly in those portions of it known as the Bhikkhunī-Khandhaka (that is the tenth and last Khandhaka of the Cullavagga) and the Bhikkhunī-Vibhanga. These prescribe the rule and discipline for the outward life of members of the order. The collection of verses known as the Therīgāthā, and the Commentaries on them, are important sources for the spiritual experiences of some of the almswomen; they also throw light on various contemporary social conditions. Other references to almswomen, scattered throughout Pāli literature, have also contributed to the present account.

No history of the Order of Almswomen has ever been written. It is impossible to reconstruct it with strict historical accuracy at this distance of time, because not merely is some of the material probably biassed, but also because some is almost certainly lacking, not having been recorded: it was most likely thought to be not sufficiently important. Had writing been in vogue during the lifetime of Gotama, it is fairly safe to assume that references to the almswomen would not have been so scanty, and that the purely monkish outlook and business would not have been so predominant as the texts which have come down to us indicate. Further, had records and chronicles been written down at the time by the almswomen themselves, we might have expected a wealth of details throwing light on their daily life and habits.

In spite of the difficulties presented by the revised and incomplete character of the texts, I hope that the following pages may justify my belief that the life of women as nuns, so long ago as the sixth century B.C., is worthy of more than the passing attention, which, with a few notable exceptions,[1] is the most that it has ever been accorded in any treatises on Buddhism.

Gotama the Buddha is generally supposed to have been born about 563 B.C., and to have died in 483 B.C., and to have renounced the world for the homeless state when he was twenty-nine years old. About six years later he won enlightenment, and began to give the teaching to mankind which has borne such immeasurable results.

Shortly after the First Utterance delivered by him there developed a phenomenon strange for Indians to witness—the almost unconscious formation, but the rapid growth of a religious Order of *bhikkhus*, monks or almsmen;[2] made stranger still by the incorporation, five years later, as it is stated, of an Order of *bhikkhunīs*, nuns or almswomen.

The life and ministry of Gotama were spent in what is now South Bihar, the eastern portion of the United Provinces and along the borders of Nepal between Bahraich and Gorakhpur.[3] Here, too, the religious Order flourished during his lifetime; this is the geographical area to which belong the events with which this survey deals. All of them are supposed to have occurred during the lifetime of the Founder. It was centuries later that both the monastic and the conventual systems spread, disseminated by the missionary zeal of the great Buddhist King Asoka (*circa* 273 B.C. to 232 B.C.) as far as Ceylon.

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[1] Outstanding among these are Mrs. Rhys Davids' translation of the Therīgāthā, *Psalms of the Sisters*, P.T.S., 1909, prefaced by an illuminating introduction; and the late Miss Lulius van Goor's *Die buddhistische Non*, Leiden, 1915.

[2] The word *bhikkhu* is literally, not beggar, mendicant, which is *yācaka*, but 'alms-man,' from *bhikkhā*—alms, or rations. The title was borrowed from Brahminism; see *Majjhima-Nikāya*, translated by Lord Chalmers, London, 1926, introduction, p. xxiv. See also Mrs. Rhys Davids' introduction to *Kindred Sayings*, vol. iv., 1927, pp. v-vii.

[3] E. J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History*, London, 1927, pp. 13, 16. Mr. Thomas says, p. 13: "The home of Buddhism lies in what is now South Behar, west of Bengal and south of the Ganges.

When the Buddhist systems appeared, they were not unique, for the Jains already had similar organisations for the male and female religious adherents of Mahāvīra. But they were strange growths, constitutionally alien to the soil of India, foreign to the mentality of her peoples. In spite of their genius for religion, refined by numerous and minute shades of belief and expressed in a diversity of forms, only the followers of Mahāvīra and Gotama formed themselves into communities of almspeople. Otherwise monasticism in India has never taken root.

The growth of an Order of Almsmen was, as it were, an experiment in religious construction—successful at first. Women were eager to take part in the venture: the times were propitious, distinguished by a greater freedom and reverence for women than had hitherto been the case. Hence it is not altogether surprising that they were allowed to join the Order, subject to the same ceremonial regulations as had been made for the almsmen, and subject to certain other disciplinary measures drawn up on their admission. As time went on many showed that they were as capable

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This was the country of the Magadhas with the capital at Rājagaha (Rajgir). East of these were the Angas, whose chief city was Campā; north of the Magadhas and on the other side of the Ganges were tribes of Vajjis (chief town Vesālī), and still further north the Mallas. West of the Magadhas were the Kāsīs, whose chief city was Benares on the Ganges. The Kingdom of the Kosalas (capital Sāvatthī or Śrāvastī) extended north of the Kāsīs as far as the Himalayas, and on the northern borders were settled the Sakyans and their neighbours on the east the Koliyas."

as the men of gaining arahanship or sainthood, the supreme goal of the religious life. The lives of others caused an increasing amount of restrictions and prohibitions to be brought into the Order of Almswomen. In reading this account it should not be forgotten that a similar process was taking place in the Order of Almsmen. They had to be restrained as much as the women by the discipline of rules. The approximation to equality of women with men indicates the amount done by Buddhism for women. On the other hand, an unprejudiced reading of the Pāli classics throws into high-relief the amount done by women as props and stays of the religion.

The way to the solidarity of this support and loyalty may have been pointed by the Teacher himself. I hope to show that he did not, as is usually said of him, grudge women their entry into the Order, but that his compassion for the many-folk included, from the beginning, women as well as men and animals. He saw the potentially good, the potentially spiritual in them as clearly as he saw it in men. Hence, were their life spent in the world or in the religious community, he spared himself no trouble to show them the way to happiness, to salvation—a way which they might train themselves to follow by self-mastery.

PART I

THE LAYWOMEN

CHAPTER I

THE MOTHER

IN the pre-Buddhist days the status of women in India was on the whole low and without honour. A daughter was nothing but a source of anxiety to her parents; for it was a disgrace to them and inauspicious as well if they could not marry her; yet, if they could, they were often nearly ruined by their lavish expenditure on the wedding festivities. Nor was she of any ceremonial benefit to her father, for she was powerless to participate in his funeral rites, and in cases where these had not already been insured by the birth of a son, distress at the birth of a daughter was almost unmitigated.

Since performance of the funeral rites was thought to be essential to a man's future happiness, he usually married chiefly in order to gain this end. Hence he regarded his wife simply as a child-bearer; and except when she took part in certain sacrifices, and was of importance as the wife of the sacrificer, her life was spent in complete subservience to her husband and his parents. She was allowed little authority at home and no part in public activities. If widowed, she became the possession of her father again, or of her son, and relapsed into personal insignificance; though as a mother of sons she was an exception, for as such she occupied a unique position which was due to the respect that she then commanded.

During the Buddhist epoch there was a change. Women came to enjoy more equality, and greater respect and authority than ever hitherto accorded them. Although their activities were confined within certain spheres—principally the domestic, social and religious—their position in general began to improve. The exclusive supremacy of man began to give way before the increasing emancipation of woman. This movement, if a development so nearly unorganised, unvoiced and unled, may be called a movement, was fostered and accelerated by the innate intelligence of the women themselves, until it was acknowledged that they were what they were silently claiming to be—responsible, rational creatures with intelligence and will. It was impossible for the men, steeped as they were in the Buddhist teaching, not to respond to the constant proofs in daily life of the women's powers of devotion, self-sacrifice, courage and endurance. They ceased to regard women as approximating in degree more nearly to the animals than to themselves; and, on the contrary, became more acutely aware of the resemblances between men and women. The Buddha gave the Dhamma to both; he also gave talks to the householders and their wives.[1] Added to this the women set fine examples in conduct and intelligence. The men, for their part, appreciated the Dhamma, and acquiesced—though tardily—in the widening of the field of women's activities. Thus, amid many currents, intricate but potent, the tide turned; and in its flow the position of women, as manifested in secular affairs, became one which was no longer intolerable and degraded, but one which was honourable and therefore bearable; women were acknowledged at last to be capable of working as a constructive force in the society of the day.

The marks of the change became visible. They are significant of the religion under which they developed, and of the part which women were to play in turning to that religion themselves and in upholding it.

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[1] *E.g.*, Ang., ii., 57.

The birth of girl-children was no longer met with open-eyed and loud-voiced despair, for girls had ceased to be despised and looked upon as encumbrances. They were now allowed a good deal of liberty. Matrimony was not held before them as the end and aim of their existence, and they were not regarded as shameful if they did not marry; but if they did, they were neither hastened off to an early child-marriage, nor bound to accept the man of their parents' selection. Princesses and ladies of high degree seem to have had some voice in the matter of choosing their husband.[1] As wife a woman was no mere household drudge, but she had considerable authority in the home, ranked as her husband's helpmate, companion and guardian, and in matters both temporal and spiritual was regarded as his equal and worthy of respect. As a mother she was definitely honoured and revered, and her position was unassailable. The work of ages had made it so, and so through the ages it has endured, untouched by the coming and going of Buddhism. As a widow she went on her way unabused, free from any suspicion of ill-omen, not excluded from the domestic festivities, probably capable of inheriting property, and certainly of managing it.[2] A woman was no longer regarded as so much part of her husband, so completely his possession, that when bereft of him her life virtually ceased. Under Buddhism, more than ever before, she was an individual in command of her own life until the dissolution of the body, and less of a chattel to be only respected if she lived through and on a man. That old complete dependence, in which the will never functioned but to obey, was gradually vanishing. So too were the popular convictions that only as child-bearers were women of any account, and that motherhood was not only their natural and almost sole function, but their most important duty, expected of one and all. These deplorable notions,[1] which emphasised the essential inferiority of women to men, and labelled them—in accordance with the popular Indian thought of the day—just a few degrees better than the animals, were melting away. Women had been regarded as belonging to a plane intermediate between men and animals, whom the Indians think of as being in a real relationship to man, differing from him simply in degree and not in kind. But with the growth of Buddhism, woman as spinster, wife and widow, with rights and duties not limited to child-bearing, became an integral part of society.

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[1] See below, p. 29 ff.· Therīgāthā, verses 464, 465, 472, 479; the word used is *vāreyyam*, marriage; Therīgāthā Cmy. on xix.

[2] *Cf.* below, p. 75.

In considering the position of the mother, a fundamental and striking aspect of all Indian thought is encountered, and one which is not peculiarly Buddhist. Hence it shows little change in comparison with that of preceding epochs. Buddhism took up the cult, for such it had been for ages, as it found it, and did nothing to alter it. That the cult went on is strikingly shown by the difference in the treatment accorded to Kisā-Gotamī.[2] She was called a nobody's daughter when married, and was disdainfully treated by the neighbours until she bore a son; then they paid her honour. Since, as far as is known, this constitutes a unique record in Buddhist literature of such a complete change of front from the attitude taken to the mere wife to that taken to the mother, it serves to show that Buddhism did not encourage the cult. But neither did it detract from it. There is so much evidence pointing to the greater respect commanded by women in every capacity, that mother-homage only appears to be less obvious and less prominent because it was merged in the improved position of women generally. Motherhood was no longer the only reason for paying deference to women.

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[1] *Cf.* Winternitz, *Die Frau in den Indischen Religionen*, vol. i., p. 22, for statement of the old views: "Und so wie die Frau nichts gilt ohne den Gatten, die Mutter nichts ohne den Sohn, so ist auch ein Mädchen nichts ohne den Bruder. . . . So ist es kein Wunder dass schon die Geburt eines Mädchens als eine Art Unglück angesehen wird."

[2] Therīgāthā Cmy. on lxiii.

The cult of the mother (included in the duty made incumbent on children to take care of their parents, for "Brahma [god] is the cherishing of parents"[1]) may account for the many passages in early Indian literature, Sanskrit, Pāli and Jain, which refer to laymen and laywomen, in which the women are almost invariably mentioned first.[2] If there were only one or two passages of this type, they might legitimately have been overlooked; but their frequency, with the almost invariable order observed in referring to the sexes, is so marked as to constitute the rule, and they cannot well be ignored. In addition, both the Sanskrit and Pāli words for parents (Sanskrit, *mātā-pitri*, Pāli, *mātāpitaro*) are combinations of the words for mother and father, in which "mother" precedes "father."

To illustrate the phrases "women and men" and "parents," a few quotations have been gathered at random from those widely scattered throughout Pāli literature. The Deva Ghaṭīkāra says: "My mother and father I maintained (*mātāpettibharo āsiṃ*)";[3] and Gotama is made to say "Waiting on mother and on father (*mātāpitu-upaṭṭhānaṃ*)"[4]. . . . "Whoso his mother and his father keeps (*mātāpettibharo*)."[5] The convention survived into later days, as passages in the Milindapañha show: "By the moil and toil of women and of men *itthīnañ-ca purisānañ-ca. . . .*"[1] "Effort of a woman or a man (*itthiyā vā purisassa*)."[2]

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[1] Ang., i., 132.

[2] The reverse holds goods for "almsmen and almswomen."

[3] Saṃy. Nik., i., 5, § 10.

[4] Sutta-Nipāta, verse 262.

[5] Saṃy. Nik., xi., 2, § 1.

There is one case, interesting because it is a mixture, written as though it had never occurred to the writer to make a distinction or to give precedence: "by explaining the good and bad points in jewels . . . women, men, youths, maidens, male and female slaves . . . (*maṇi . . . itthi-purisa-kumāra-kumāri-dāsa-dāsi-lakkhaṇaṃ*)."[3]

Three definite exceptions are found in the Saṃyutta Nikāya: "as if boys and girls (*kumārakā vā kamārikayo*) on coming out of the village"[4] and "Just as when Radha, boys or girls (*kumārakā va kumāriyo*) play with little sand castles. . . . But Radha, as soon as those boys or girls are rid of lust. . . ."[5] Such examples stand almost alone.

The reason underlying this usage is not clear. The theory that it arose solely as a detail of literary style seems to afford hardly sufficient explanation. Nor can it be supposed that it resulted from the prominent position of the women themselves; for nearly all the other known facts concerning their status, both at the time when the texts were written down and the times which they purport to describe, point to the contrary. Women in India were never regarded as superior to men, and in historical times they never lived so greatly honoured as to procure for themselves on that ground alone prior mention in verbal or literary records. It seems more likely, since the phrase "women and men" and the compound word for "parents" are common to all early Indian literature, that their origins are rooted in some ancient, forgotten social organisation, where mother-right and mother-rule were dominant features.

This view is substantiated by the custom, in force during the Buddhist epoch, in accordance with which men gave their mothers' names when describing their identity.[1] Had promiscuity been prevalent, this would certainly account for such a custom; but although there are some records of illicit love, the practice was condemned by the insistence on the virtue of continence found throughout the Pāli literature, and it formed the exception and not the rule. Hence this use of the mother's name may be taken as contributory evidence to the belief that the mother's exalted position was a heritage of by-gone days, and was reflected in the word for "parent." This seems a more probable theory than the one based on purely stylistic grounds.

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[1] Milindapañha, ii., 3, 5.

[2] *Ibid.*, iv., 6, 58.

[3] Dialogues, i., 9.

[4] Saṃy. Nik., iv., 3, § 4.

[5] *Ibid.*, xxiii., § 2 (2).

The observance of filial duty was regarded as one of the most imperative obligations by which children were bound during the life-time of their parents, although it was not expected to continue after their death. The basis of this duty was the gratitude anticipated from the children as a kind of payment to be made by them after they had attained to years of discretion;[2] for the care, attention and love which their parents had bestowed upon them, while they were still quite young, were thought to deserve a full acknowledgment. Some of the possible ways of making this are summarised in the Sigālôvādasutta: "In five ways should a child minister to his parents as the Eastern quarter: once supported by them, I will now be their support; I will perform duties incumbent on them; I will keep up the lineage and tradition (*kula vaṃsa*) of my family; I will make myself worthy of my heritage."[3] For "parents do much for their children; they support them and nourish them and show them this world."[1]

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[1] *E.g.*, Majjhima, i., 150, where Punna and Upatissa tell each other that they are known to their fellows in the higher life as Mantāniputta (son of the brahmin lady Mantānī) and Sāriputta (son of the brahmin lady Sārī). Sometimes men were asked to give the name of both their parents, as at *e.g.*, Majjhima, ii., 102.

[2] For meaning of this term see below, p. 28.

[3] Sigālvôādasutta, verse 28, Dialogues, iii., 189.

It is significant that one of the few passages[2] which do not openly insist that parents should give training in order to reap subsequent gratitude occurs in the Great Homily for Laymen: "In five ways parents thus ministered to as the Eastern quarter by their child show their love (*anukampanti*) for him; they restrain him from vice, they exhort him to virtue, they train him to a profession, they contract a suitable marriage for him, and in due time hand over his inheritance." Such passages are rare. Usually there is no mention of the parents' duties and responsibilities of instruction, religious and secular, towards the children. Although there are various particular instances of the fulfilment of mundane hopes, the parent who seeks to fit the child to master and tame himself, or to know the world in a practical way, has little place in Buddhist literature. In bringing up their children, parents thought less of developing them and of training them to lead the good life and of teaching them to progress faithfully on the Way, than of inculcating in them a sense of gratitude and indebtedness. The root relation between parents and children was thus analogous to the relation between creditor and debtor.

The duty of supporting and reverencing the parents was repeatedly laboured, and the importance attached to this branch of conduct was constantly emphasised in many and forcible exhortations: "Son, is it not the duty of children to cherish and support the old age of their parents?"[3]

> "To mother and to father shouldst thou show
> Humility, to eldest brother too,
> And fourthly to thy teacher."[4]

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[1] Ang., i., 61; *cf.* Ang., iii., 132, where instead of "support them" it says "produce them."

[2] Sigālôvādasutta, Dialogues, iii., 189.

[3] Dialogues, iii.; S.B.B., p. 180, note 5.

[4] Saṃy. Nik., vii., 2, § 5.

Gotama is reported to have spoken this verse to the proud brahmin. It is perhaps a sign of the potency and immutability of the age-old idea that, of the four objects to whom humility should be shown, the mother is placed first. Her importance is insisted upon again and again. It did not wane during the lapse of years, as a Jātaka passage testifies: "A mother like a sire should be with reverend honour crowned."[1] Here she is represented as enjoying exactly the same position as she held in ancient India, where woman as mother commanded a respect otherwise unknown to her.

The notion involved in making a child act so that he might say, "Once supported by my parents, I will now be their support,"[2] was that such conduct, besides fulfilling the right and reasonable expectations of the parents, would also bring its own rewards; some in this becoming, some in future becomings; as is shown in the following quotations:

> "Whoso his mother and his father keeps. . . .
> On such a one the three and thirty gods
> Do verily confer the name : 'Good Man.'"[3]
>
> "In normal fashion whoso doth maintain
> His mother or his father, in this life
> Him for that cherishing the wise commend,
> And after death he wins the joys of heaven."[4]

This is the reply which Gotama is said to have given to the rich brahmin who asked him if he were not doing right in maintaining his parents.

One of the consequences of neglecting parents in this becoming is pointed out to the brahmin Aggikabhāradvāja, as it is reported, by Gotama: "Whoso being rich does not support mother and father when old and past their youth, let one know him as an outcast. Whoso strikes or by words annoys mother, father, brother, sister, or mother-in-law, let one know him as an outcast."[1] The failure of a rich man to support his old parents is also said to be "the cause (of loss) to the losing (man)."[2]

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[1] Jātaka, 532.

[2] Sigālôvādasutta, Dialogues, iii., 189.

[3] Saṃy. Nik., ix., 2, § 1 ; *cf.* Jātaka, 532 ; verse repeated at Ang., i., 132.

[4] Saṃy. Nik., vii., 2, § 9 ; *cf.* Jātaka, 537.

Ideas of this kind became welded into the life of the people and were the springs of some of their actions. In states of society where the family was taken as the basic unit, such utterances exercise considerable influence of an integrating kind. Both in the canonical and in the post-canonical literature there are frequent references to children—daughters as well as sons—who supported their parents, whether they had left the world as recluses[3] or whether they had remained in it.[4] The same mark stamps the first of the seven rules of conduct that the god Sakka is said to have desired to carry out when he was a man: "As long as I live, may I maintain my parents."[5] That this should be quoted in the Dhammapada Commentary[6] may be adduced as proof of the strong grip which the idea of filial reverence and gratitude held on people's minds.

Yet however much children might work[7] for their parents and support them, however many offerings they might bring to the dead and departed,[8] it was thought that they could scarcely repay the benefits which had been showered upon them. It came to be taught that there was only one way possible of discharging the debt. The burden of teaching the doctrine and discipline was made to fall upon the children, and as might be expected from the monk-editors, it is by fulfilling this duty that the children are said to be able to repay their parents.[1] So throughout Pāli literature religious functions were superadded to domestic duties explicitly or implicitly. For example Buddhaghosa defines "keeping up the lineage and tradition" as not dissipating the property; restoring, if necessary, the family honour; and maintaining gifts to the almspeople.[2]

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[1] Sutta-Nipāta, verses 123, 124.

[2] *Ibid.*, verse 97.

[3] V., iv., p. 286 ; Saṃy. Nik., vii., 2, § 9. But *cf.* Āpastamba, ii., 5, 10, 1 : "The reasons for (which) begging (is permissible are) . . . the desire to keep one's father and mother," and Manu, iv., 4, 5, where it is said that a brahmin may subsist by *mṛta*, food obtained by begging, though Manu x., 113 declares that gleaning ears (of corn) is preferable to accepting gifts. It is possible that the brahmin who supported his mother at Saṃy. Nik., vii., 2-9, was not a recluse.

[4] *E.g.*, Dhp. Cmy. on verse 110.

[5] Saṃy. Nik., xi., 2, § 1.

[6] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 30.

[7] Ang., iii., 43.

[8] *Ibid.* This reason shows traces of brahmanical influence, and may therefore be a later accretion to the texts. Buddhism did not consider that the dead needed human help in the same way as the living ; nor that they were dependent on such external acts and forces as offerings for the preservation of their bliss in the becoming to which they had fared on.

One of the effects of this persistent instruction to reverence the parents was the great authority which accrued to the mother in the home. More than this. Since her rule was usually benign and wise and guided by affection, she retained her hold over her children's loyalty. For example Anuruddha's mother declared her love for her son in glowing terms: "My dear son, even as the eye is dear to one who possesses but one eye, and even as the heart, so are you exceedingly dear to me," and she was rewarded by his obedience to her wishes.[3] The mother was the pivot around which much devotion and genuine admiration revolved, and she well deserved her portrayal as the good friend dwelling in the home.[4]

The self-sacrifice of the mother, her readiness to fight to the bitter end, if need be, for the life of her child, heedless of her own safety, was a common trait, and in one place it is almost glibly inserted as a simile for the cultivation of "a boundless (friendly mind) towards all beings," just as "a mother at the risk of her own life watches over her own child, her only child."[5] A touching story is told of the stoical mother of a deformed monstrosity of a child.[1] Because he was so repulsive, people refused to give her any food, and she sank into the depths of poverty. But although nearly starving she did not abandon him, "for great is the love of a mother for the child she has carried in her womb, and by dint of leaving him at home and going out alone she received food to support her."

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[1] Ang., i., 61.

[2] Dialogues, iii., 189.

[3] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 17.

[4] Saṃy. Nik., i., 6, § 3.

[5] Sutta-Nipāta, verse 148.

The mother's love of her son is frequently represented as more intense than the father's. In the story of one mother who steadfastly refused to forsake her son,[2] the father cuts a lamentable figure. He urged his wife to desert the child, using the heartless argument, "Wife, if we live we shall have another son"; but when she replied with decision "I could never cast away a living child (*putta*)," he waited until it was again his turn to carry their little son. He then surreptitiously left him under a bush and resumed the journey. When she discovered the ruse the mother was distracted; she cried, "Husband, do not kill me," and smiting upon her breast and weeping she prevailed upon him to go back and retrieve their child. A picture of her baby crying in his fear and loneliness may have leapt to her mind. Yet it was not only the power of children residing in their tears (*roṇṇabalā dārakā*)[3] that bound their mothers to them; there was something deeper and stronger impelling them to preserve their lives, not to be explained away by such a proverb as "a mother's heart is tender."[4]

Another example of this dominating mother-love is the story of the mother of Angulimāla, the robber.[5] The father declared, "I will have naught to do with sons of that sort." He was content to remain passive and made no effort to prevent his son from committing acts of theft, nor to protect him from arrest by the king's forces. But the mother could not tolerate the thought of such disasters; and "she in love, took provisions, and set out saying: 'I will bring my son and stop him.'" There is therefore force in the simile, "gracious to him as a mother to her own, her only son,"[1] used to describe the attitude of the deities (or "good and upright men of self-control") to the prudent man who makes them gifts.

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[1] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 62.

[2] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 21-23.

[3] Ang., iv., 223.

[4] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 21-23.

[5] Theragāthā Cmy. on cclv; *cf.* Majjhima, ii., 97, 98.

Such stories give food for thought and incline one to wonder whether it would not be more true to life to substitute "mother's love" for "parents'" in the phrase "stronger than parents' love is nothing here."[2]

Mother-love for daughters is illustrated in such distress as Ubbirī[3] evinced when her daughter died, or as Sumedhā's mother[4] showed when her daughter proposed to enter on the religious life. It may justly be argued that this was due more to the fear of virtually losing a dear child than to the hope of seeing her daughter safely and properly married—the idea which permeated the old school of thought. For one certainly cannot read the stories of these ancient days without realising that one of the most salient features of the home life was the depth of the maternal love for children of both sexes.

The affection of fathers for their daughters was possibly enhanced by the fact that there was no longer believed to be any ceremonial need for sons. It finds vivid expression in one or two passages in the Therīgāthā. Sumedhā's father was "stunned with grief"[5] at her proposal to enter the Order, more because he loved her greatly than because he wanted to see her married. Equally forcible is the beginning of Isidāsī's *résumé* of her life. She said that her father dwelt at Ujjeni.

> "His only daughter I, his well-beloved,
> The fondly cherished treasure of his life."[6]

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[1] Mahāparinirvānasutta, i., 31.

[2] Jātaka, 444.

[3] Therīgāthā Cmy. on xxxiii.

[4] Therīgāthā, lxxiii.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Therīgāthā, verse 405.

The story of the youthful Sāmāvatī illustrates the reciprocal nature of this sentiment.[1] She wept and wailed and lamented "over the misfortune which had come upon her in the loss first of her father and then of her mother." It is recorded that the woman of Sāvatthi on the death of her mother became "crazed and beside herself, went about from street to street and from cross-road to cross-road saying: 'Have you seen my mother? Have you seen my mother?'"[2] and that another woman of Sāvatthi when her father died went about asking: "Have you seen my father?"[3]

The mother, facing dangers for her children, was taken as the heroic self-sacrificing type of Indian womanhood. Similarly the mother, bereft of her child, her possession, and not the wife mourning for her dead husband, her possessor, came to be regarded as the *Mulier Dolorosa*, on account of the position accorded to the mother on sociological grounds. Yet the fearless, devoted, whole-hearted woman was there all the time, sacrificing herself and encountering difficulties for her husband's sake no less than for her children's. But because the wife's position was more humble and less honourable than the mother's, the wife as such was never exalted to the venerable antiquity of a type.

In spite of exhortations, in spite of precepts, in spite of promises and threats of deserts to be reaped here and hereafter, family friction and quarrels were bound to mar the peace of the domestic circle from time to time. Records of such dissension between parents and children are, however, so few and far between as scarcely to blur the cumulative impression of happy homes, swept by the breath of contented love. They have diligently to be searched for among a mass of material all pointing in the contrary direction, and only a few are to be found. This is partly due, no doubt, to the lack of interest shown by the monk-editors of the texts in any but monastic concerns. They were not social historians, and thus seldom recorded the inner workings of the home.

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[1] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 21-23.

[2] Majjhima, ii., 108.

[3] *Ibid.*, ii., 109.

In the Vinaya the case of a young man is cited.[1] He is said to have quarrelled with his parents and to have gone off in a pet and joined the Order of Almsmen. The reason for the quarrel is not given. The cause which seems most often to have led to trouble was the presence in most households of the mother-in-law of the wife.[2] It seems to have been peculiarly difficult for a wife to follow the maxim which bade her "grow up wise and virtuous, her husband's mother rev'rencing, true wife."[3] Sons, whose abode their mothers often shared, were as a rule so much under their wives' influence, that they were unable to stand up for mother or father. With lives blighted by their children's ingratitude, parents are sometimes recorded to have left the home for the homeless state. The widow Bahuputtikā's own children and their husbands and wives treated her so unkindly that she decided to adopt the religious life.[4]

Against these cases, exemplifying the traditional relationship to the parents-in-law, stands the story of the wife of a great merchant who was cured of pains in her head, from which she had been suffering for seven years. When she was restored to health, her husband and son and *daughter-in-law* all gave the physician large sums of money, apparently out of gratitude for her recovery.[5]

In view of these facts—the devotion of the parents, the honour due to them, and the duty owed to them—matricide (*mātughātaka*)[1] and parricide (*pitughātaka*)[2] must have been looked upon as terrible crimes, and, even discounting the general ban placed upon the taking of life, as intensely reprehensible. It is characteristic of Buddhism, it may be remarked in passing, that the punishment of such offences was never "an eye for an eye."

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[1] MV., i., 48.

[2] Therīgāthā, xlv.; Dhp. Cmy. on verse 115—which possibly refer to the same woman; and Saṃy. Nik., vii., 2, § 4; Dhp. Cmy. on verse 324, where the story is repeated.

[3] Saṃy. Nik., iii., 2, § 6.

[4] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 115.

[5] MV., viii., 1, 8-13.

Since there is no statistical evidence for cases of matricide or parricide—any more than for other events of those early days—there is no means of determining their frequency; but that the practice prevailed to some extent may be inferred from its inclusion in various groups of disqualifications from monastic duties mentioned in the Vinaya:[3] these were formulated solely when some particular instance had come to Gotama's notice, and never as mere hypotheses. The only case of matricide recorded in the Vinaya is innocent of all detail as to the cause of the action, the core of the matter alone being preserved: "At that time a young man deprived his mother of life."[4] The next chapter records a case, equally devoid of accessory detail, of a young man who committed the crime of parricide.[5] On their seeking entry into the Order and confessing their deeds, general rules were formulated to the effect that no one who was guilty of matricide or of parricide should receive the Upasampadā Ordination; and if such a one had received it, he should be expelled from the Order. In the Milindapañha[1] it is said that he who has slain his mother or his father will not attain to insight into the Dhamma.

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[1] *Cf.* "*Matṛ-vadha* 'matricide' is mentioned as a very grave crime in the Kauṣītaki Upanishad (iii., 1), but as one that can be expiated by the knowledge of the truth." (The murder of the father is also mentioned here as a grave crime.) "*Matṛ-han*' 'matricide,' 'mother-killer' occurs in a Vedic quotation mentioned by the commentator on Pāṇini." Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, London, 1912, vol. ii., p. 151.

[2] *Cf.* "'*Pitṛ-han*,' 'parricide,' is found in the Atharvaveda, Paippalada recension." Macdonell and Keith, *loc. cit.*, vol. i., p. 530.

[3] MV., i., 64, 2; ii., 22, 3-4; ii., 36, 1-3; iv., 14, 1-3; viii., 30 1-3; ix., 4, 2; ix., 10, 4.

[4] MV., i., 64.

[5] *Ibid.*, i., 65.

The occurrence of these crimes may also be deduced from the maxim which occurs both in the Majjhima[2] and in the Anguttara:[3] " It is impossible for a man of vision, but possible for an ordinary man, to take his mother's—or his father's—life." The prior mention of matricide suggests a further argument in favour of the high honour paid to the mother.

This antithesis between men who are able to commit these acts and those who are not, at once puts such conduct into a class which is at least not to be emulated. No overt mention is made here of its blameworthy nature, but that this is undoubtedly the conclusion to be drawn is discernible from the form of the aphorism, which is therefore in accordance with the attitude taken in the Vinaya. Hence it is certainly " startling, as Max Müller says, to find the two following verses in the Dhammapada apparently entirely out of harmony with the whole trend of contemporary thought on this subject:

> " A true Brāhmaṇa goes scatheless, though he have killed mother and father, and two valiant kings, though he has destroyed a kingdom with all its subjects.
>
> " A true Brāhmaṇa goes scatheless, though he have killed mother and father and two holy kings, and an eminent man besides."[4]

Such inconsistency hardly appears to admit of any explanation, although modern editors have expended much ingenuity upon it. The almsmen were certainly amazed, as is reported in the Commentary on these verses, and could hardly believe their eyes or their ears when they were told that an Elder whom they saw walking in their midst had killed both his mother and his father.

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[1] Milindapañha, iv., 8, 53.

[2] Majjhima, iii., 64, 65.

[3] Ang., i., 27.

[4] Dhammapada, 294-295. For the points in the modern controversy on the correct interpretation of these verses *see* note on the verses, S.B.E., x., 2nd ed., p. 71.

The mother-murder said to have been committed by Rohiṇī,[1] not only in this becoming, but also in former becomings, cannot truly rank as matricide. She appears to have been a senseless girl who, whilst swinging a pestle in the attempt to kill some flies which had settled on her mother's head, had the misfortune to slay the old woman outright, only to lament her in vain.

With the exception of these few instances, the unbroken silence of the remainder of the texts on the subject of matricide points to the conclusion that it was rather an occasional than an habitual feature of the times.

References to parricide among the commoners are also extremely scanty. Royalty receives more attention. The Sumangalavilāsinī Commentary,[2] one of the later Buddhist books, calmly remarks, as if it were an ordinary event, that five kings had been murdered by their sons. Yet, although the general populace cannot be judged by the divinity hedging a king, it is probable that, had the monks who edited the texts been more interested in worldly life, they would have inserted more records of this crime. For all the world over, and not only where society consists partly of people in a low state of culture, matricide and parricide occur; it would hence be unreasonable to expect an exception in favour of Buddhist India.

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[1] Jātaka, 45.

[2] Sumangalavilāsinī, i., p. 136.

CHAPTER II

THE DAUGHTER

THE Vedic and the Buddhist epochs are marked by a striking difference in the position of women as daughters. In the earlier days, until they were married, daughters were apt to be regarded as unwelcome burdens, and the birth of a girl-child was looked upon as an almost unmitigated curse or catastrophe.[1] But at the time of the rise of Buddhism and during its early days, the status of unmarried women was higher than it had ever been in India before—and, we may add, than it has been since. This was reflected in popular sentiment: among the ordinary people it was the child (*putta*) as such, and not the son as opposed to the daughter, who was the object of the parents' affection, and the centre of their hopes and aspirations. There are several passages which refer to "child" without specifying the sex.[2] For example, in the Paradise Suttas, it is stated: "A parent of children (*puttimā*) in his children (*puttehi*) is glad;"[3] and "Naught love we as we love the child (*putta*) that is ours."[4] Certainly both these passages are said to have been uttered by the deva, and for our present purposes the replies attributed to Gotama—containing a partially veiled warning and a denial—are not pertinent. The deva's words, on the other hand, are illuminating in this connection; for is he not a mere type of humanity, a fellow-man of other worlds,[1] introduced here as a mouthpiece for the men and women who are to be met with in every-day life?

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[1] *Cf.* Macdonell and Keith, *loc. cit.*, vol. i., p. 487; and Winternitz, *Die Frau in den Indischen Religionen*, vol. i., p. 21 ff.

[2] *Cf.* Nanda Paṇḍita, Dattaka Mīmānsā, tr. J. C. C. Sutherland in Hindu Law Books, ed. Whitley Stokes, Madras, 1865, p. 616, where the use of the term *putra* to signify both sexes is discussed.

[3] Saṃy. Nik., i., 2, § 2.

[4] *Ibid.*, i., 2, § 3.

Gotama appears to have supported the progressives in the incipient conflict against the predominance of the old views; notably in the kindly admonition which he is said to have given to King Pasēnadi of Kosala on discovering that he was not pleased that his Buddhist Queen Mallikā had given birth to a daughter.[2] This is the only expression of the advanced view that a girl "may prove even a better offspring" than a boy. In spite of the Teacher's example, it is ominous that there is no echo, no renewal of this view in the texts. The fact that this remark alone struggled through the editing done by the monks, and that it is nowhere else substantiated or repeated, leads us to suppose that here a real Gotama-saying, and not monk-talk, has survived. As such it is immeasurably valuable. On the other hand, in no other place in Pāli literature is dissatisfaction recorded at the birth of a daughter; and Pasēnadi, after all, had not yet been converted to Buddhism. With this exception, although there are no records of joy on the birth of a daughter, there are no records of dismay, of outcries raised, or even of natural disappointment. In a word, there is no literary evidence for supposing that boys were more welcome than girls. In fact, in one not inconsiderable section of the population girls were preferred to boys. It was said of the courtesans that, if they had children at all—a very doubtful blessing to people in their circumstances—"they will bestow care on a daughter, but not on a son, for it is through a daughter that their line of business is maintained."[3] With this exception the birth of sons or of daughters, in whatever circumstances, met with a reception unrelated to the sex of the child.

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[1] C. A. F. Rhys-Davids, "Buddhism and the Negative," p. 13, *J.P.T.S.*, 1924-26; *cf.* below, p. 116.

[2] Saṃy. Nik., iii., 2, § 6.

[3] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 21-23.

Particular cases of longing for a child, son or daughter, are not infrequently mentioned. Kings,[1] sometimes spurred on by their people,[2] nobles,[3] and indeed most people felt strongly the need of preserving the line so as to perpetuate the race and hand on the property.

The rich householder Mahā-Suvaṇṇa (Great Wealth), who was no true Buddhist, was childless.[4] According to custom, he decked up a big tree with flags and banners,[5] as the Hindus do to-day, and made the following vow: "Should I be granted a son or a daughter, I will pay you great honour." It is not impossible that the more rational attitude of Buddhism towards women had already influenced Mahā-Suvaṇṇa, even if his animistic beliefs were as yet untouched. Brahmadatta[6] and Kāsirājā[7] and a brahmin woman[8] are all recorded to have put up a prayer for either a son or a daughter. Thus the new ideas were permeating public opinion. The same interpretation may be put upon Prince Bodhi's attempts to wrest the secret from the future.[9] He believed that the sign would be the same whether he were destined to have a son or a daughter. This marks a stupendous change from the old way of thinking; for the Hindus would never have demeaned themselves in their own eyes by presuming that the sign for a daughter, a curse, a nobody,[10] could be precisely the same as that for a son, the eventual performer of his father's funeral obsequies. It also shows that the birth of the child was regarded as eminently desirable, whether it was a son or not.

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[1] *E.g.*, Jātaka, 531.

[2] Jātaka, 531, 538.

[3] V., iii., p. 18.

[4] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 1.

[5] A kind of fertility rite. It survives in present-day Hinduism.

[6] Jātaka, 521.

[7] *Ibid.*, 538.

[8] *Ibid.*, 509.

[9] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 157.

[10] Winternitz, ***Die Frau in den Indischen Religionen***, vol. i., p. 24 ff.

For Buddhism did not subscribe to the belief, of predominant importance in the eyes of the brahmins, that sons were essential to their father's safe translation to heaven.[1] The absence of this belief is also corroborated in two practical ways: first it removed a certain hardship from woman's lot, for under Buddhism, although a husband might put away his wife if she were barren, he might not do so if she bore daughters only.[2] And secondly it obviated the need, in cases where there were no male descendants, to procure "substitutes for a son (to prevent) failure of the (funeral) ceremonies."[3] Hence if sons were adopted, the motives prompting such an undertaking were love, compassion, or the desire for companionship.

The adoption of daughters was probably an innovation.[4] This happy fate befel the youthful Sāmāvatī[1] who, after she had been orphaned by the outbreak of the plague, was adopted by the householder Mitta. He was deeply moved by the tale of her bereavements and suffering, and said: "Hitherto you have been the daughter of the great merchant Bhaddhavatiya, but from this day forth you shall be my very own daughter." Another instance occurs in the Dhammapada Commentary; a certain King, it is said, took Kāṇā and "made her as his own oldest daughter."[2]

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[1] So in the Brid. Upanishad., iii., 5, 1: "A desire for sons is a desire for wealth, a desire for wealth is a desire for worlds." *Cf.* Manu, ix., 137: "By a son a man conquers worlds; by a son's son he enjoys immortality; and afterwards by the son of a grandson he reaches the solar abode."

[2] Among the Hindus a wife could be put away, or a second wife taken, if the first bore no son.

[3] Manu, ix., 180.

[4] Nanda Paṇḍita, the author of the Dattakā Mīmānsā, says that daughters' sons are equally efficacious as sons' sons in performing the funeral rites. Hence on failure of the real legitimate daughter, for the sake of obtaining the heaven procured by the daughter's son, a substitute for the daughter may be established. Five kinds of subsidiary daughters are mentioned. Instances indicating the substitute for a daughter are found in the Puranas. The author of the Dattakā Mīmānsāt hinks that the phrases "given, . . . let be given, . . . shall be given, . . . having given," indicate that the woman given to the childless king, resembling the legitimate daughter, is a substitute for issue. This refers to Santā in the Ramāyana, the adopted daughter of Lomāpada. An indication of a daughter made is found in the Mahābhārata, "Kunti made Pṛthā his daughter." She was daughter of Gandūsha, son of Sura, and his chief queen. There was also the brahmin Sunandika, whose wife was barren, "himself having taken her (in adoption),—Susīlā, who was the child of another." Kanva adopted a deserted girl. Both these two last are mentioned in the Puranas. Dattakā Mīmānsā, trans. J. C. C. Sutherland, in Hindu

There are no records of any woman who adopted a child or who gave a child to be adopted. It is not possible to tell whether such procedure would have been prescribed as it was by Vasiṣṭha,[3] "Let not a woman either give or receive a son in adoption; unless with the assent of her husband." This last clause rules out adoption by widows. Had the ceremonial need for sons been part of the Buddhist creed, records of adoption would probably have been more numerous. But it held, on the contrary, that freedom and nirvāna were attainable for those destitute of offspring (*putta*). Indeed those entering on the monastic way, deemed the swiftest way to reach nirvāna, were obliged to rid themselves of the encumbrances of wife and children. They often handed their children over to guardians,[4] but these cannot be regarded in the light of adoptive parents.

Since the general public did not regard the birth of girls as a disaster, it follows that the custom of female infanticide—which never seems to have taken hold in India—if it obtained at all in Buddhist times, must have been extremely rare. Several well-grounded

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Law Books, ed. Whitley Stokes, Madras, 1865, ch. vii., p. 519. *Cf.* Macdonell and Keith, *loc. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 498: "The Paṇis offer to adopt Saramā as their sister, but this use is not applied . . . to ordinary human beings."

[1] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 21-23.

[2] *Ibid.* on verse 82; see below, p. 38.

[3] Vasiṣṭha, 15, 4.

[4] See below, p. 215.

reasons confirm this supposition. In the first place, the practice found no favour or recommendation among the brahmanical texts.[1] Hence it had not the sanction of tradition. Secondly, when Buddhism dawned upon the world, the doctrine of *ahiṃsā* (non-injury), although never fully sanctioned except by the Jains, held a moderated sway over the whole of India; and it would certainly cover the murder of a defenceless human being. Such an action would have been regarded as an infallible source of a host of bad karma, and therefore one to be strenuously avoided by the prudent. Thirdly, abstention from murder was one of the five Sīlas of the fundamental code of Buddhist ethics, laid down for the laity and the recluses alike. Fourthly, the economic conditions in India from the seventh to the fourth centuries B.C. appear to have been fairly flourishing.[2] In addition the absence of sacrifices obviated the need for any sacrificial infanticide—of which, incidentally, boys were usually the victims in India.

If infanticide was never practised in Buddhist India, except sometimes by the courtesans,[3] yet it was not unimagined and unimaginable, and the idea of it sometimes entered into other people's minds. One notable instance occurs in the Sumangalavilāsinī.[4] The lady known as Ajātasattu's mother was anxious to kill her unborn child. In her eyes this action would be justifiable; for she had heard it predicted that this child would turn out to be a parricide. But since she was dissuaded by her husband and in due time bore a son, this constitutes a case of contemplated infanticide only, and not an actual one. Nor can the attempt of a father to abandon his son to almost certain death[1] be regarded as a case of strict infanticide, for it was quite unpremeditated and simply adopted as a possible plan for extricating himself and his wife from a fate which looked desperate.

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[1] Winternitz, *Die Frau in den Indischen Religionen*, vol. i., p. 24; A. B. Keith, *The Religion and the Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, Harvard Univ. Press, 1925, p. 475; Macdonell and Keith, *loc. cit.*, vol. i., p. 487: "There is no proof that the Vedic Indians practised the exposure of female children." *Cf.* p. 395; vol. ii., p. 114.

[2] *Cambridge History of India*, vol. i., p. 219.

[3] See below, p. 89.

[4] Sumangalavilāsinī, i., p. 136.

Child-murder should be distinguished from infanticide. The story of the attempts of the great merchant of Kosambi to kill the boy who was said to be destined to become the chief great merchant of Kosambi[2] is an example of the former; for it was not his own son, but that of another, whom he wanted to put to death. So, too, was the action of the barren woman[3] who caused abortion twice in the fruitful woman who was her co-wife, and finally the death of the infant just before it was born.[4] There are indeed no records in Pāli literature of infanticide proper.

The Vedic and the Buddhist epochs agreed in respect of female infanticide; a difference between them appears in the attitude taken to the unmarried woman. According to pre-Buddhist thought, a woman's plain duty was to become married;[5] and although this notion was never entirely superseded, the strength of the idea that to be unmarried was a disgrace in a woman diminished under Buddhism. A woman no longer felt bound to marry to save her self-respect and that of her family, but, on the contrary, found that she could honourably remain unmarried without running the gauntlet of public scorn. That a single life was a wasted life, or a life open to scoffs and sneers, became to a great extent an anachronism. Unfortunately it marked only a passing phase, for the old notions concerning women were too deeply embedded to be easily or completely eradicated, even by the efforts of one who commanded such great and widespread respect as did Gotama. By the time that the Milindapañha was written down, the insertion of such a phrase as this was permitted:[1] "There are, O King, these ten sorts of individuals who are despised and contemned in the world, thought shameful, looked down upon, held blameworthy, treated with contumely, not loved. And what are the ten? A woman without a husband, O King, and a weak creature, and one without friends or relatives, and a glutton, and one dwelling in a disreputable family, and the friend of sinners, and he whose wealth has been dissipated, and he who has no character, and he who has no occupation, and he who has no means." The unmarried woman or widow heads the list of this pack of undesirables.

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[1] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 21-23; see above, p. 12.

[2] *Ibid.*, *cf.* Jātaka, 454.

[3] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 5.

[4] The murder of an embryo was regarded as a most serious crime. Brid. Upanishad, iv., 3, 22. When a man has "passed beyond all sorrows of the heart" then "a destroyer of the embryo becomes not the destroyer of an embryo." *Cf.* Kauṣītaki Upanishad, iii., 1. The guilt incurred by killing an embryo may be expiated by knowledge.

[5] *Cf.* Macdonell and Keith, *loc. cit.*, vol. i., p. 30, "*amājur* is an epithet denoting maidens 'who grow old at home' without finding husbands; or, as they are elsewhere called 'who sit with their father' (*pitṛ-ṣad*)."

Such sentiments, happily for the women, were far from the spirit of the early Buddhist days, when unmarried girls might go unabused, contented, adequately occupied at home, caring for their parents and younger brothers and sisters; or like Subhā, the goldsmith's daughter,[2] the mistress of great possessions, slaves, hirelings, villages, rich fields and meadows, amounting to no mean estate, managing her own property. But in view of the history of the status of the mother, it is unlikely that none of the unmarried felt the pangs of jealousy rise in them towards the women who were able to fulfil their traditional *rôle*, and participate in its train of absorbing interests; like Sumanā, Anāthapiṇḍika's youngest daughter, an unmarried girl might be "overwhelmed with disappointment at her failure to obtain a husband."[3]

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[1] Milindapañha, iv., 8, 22.

[2] Therīgāthā Cmy. on lxx.

[3] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 18.

The lot of the unmarried women was immensely improved by the establishment of the Order of Almswomen. The possibility of entering upon the homeless state opened up a new career for them, and in spite of its faults and defects, the conventual life was an unparalleled boon to many. If, for any reason, they felt the need of escaping from their circumstances, or the need of religion for its own sake, they had now within their reach the privilege of seceding from the world. If, on the other hand, they felt drawn to marriage, the contract was usually not settled without their consent.

The custom of child-marriage does not appear to have been prevalent,[1] for there is little mention of it in the canonical literature. One illuminating reference is found in the Bhikkhunīvibhanga,[2] where a girl of less than twelve years old (*ūnadvādasavassā*) is ordained by the almswomen. She is said to be a bride (*gihigatā*), which, according to the Commentary, is one who cohabits with a man (*purisantaragatā*). This case, and the rule to which it gave rise, leave no room for doubt as to the occurrence of child-marriage. At the same time this incident is recorded far on in the Bhikkhunīvibhanga, and may possibly have been added to the rules at a later date, when the custom had become more usual than it appears to have been in the early days of Buddhism. That the custom was not unknown some time after the death of the Founder may be deduced from a passage in the Milindapañha,[3] where a hypothetical case is given of two men who have a fierce argument as to which of them is the rightful husband of a certain woman. The second man is made to support his claim by saying that " the little girl, the mere child ” whom his rival chose cannot be considered as the same person whom he chose when she was grown up. From this it also appears that the custom of betrothal was observed, the wife waiting—as she does among some sects of the Hindus of the present day—at her parents' house until at a later date the wedding ceremony is performed. On the other hand, the first of the five special woes that a woman is said to have to suffer as distinct from a man[1] (*āveṇikā*, defined in the Commentary as *not in common with males*) is that of going at a tender age to her husband's family, and leaving her own relatives behind. What is meant by a tender age is not clearly defined. Presumably it may be anything between twelve and twenty years old. But this passage leaves no room for doubt, but that the wife went when young, and that this was looked upon as a hardship, ranking with pregnancy, bringing-forth, menstruation, and waiting upon a man.

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[1] *Cf.* Macdonell and Keith, *loc. cit.*, vol. i., p. 475 : " Child-wives first appear in the Sūtra period, though it is still uncertain to what extent the rule of marriage before puberty there obtained."

[2] V., iv., pp. 321, 322.

[3] Milindapañha, ii., 2, 6, and *cf.* below, p. 33.

No age is prescribed as the correct marriageable age, but girls probably married as a rule between the ages of sixteen and twenty. Visākhā,[2] for example, married when she was sixteen. Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā[3] was still unmarried at the age of sixteen. Others, such as Selā the Āḷavikan[4] and Sumedhā,[5] are recorded to have been still unmarried when they attained to years of discretion. The exact meaning of this phrase is doubtful,[6] but it is evident that it points to an age higher than that of child-marriage.

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[1] Saṃy. Nik., XXXVII., iii., i, § 3 (3).

[2] Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, p. 455.

[3] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 102-103, and *cf. ibid.* on verse 215.

[4] Therīgāthā Cmy. on xxxv.

[5] *Ibid.* on lxxiii.

[6] *Cf.* Vinaya Texts, S.B.E., vol. i., p. 35, note 1. “*Viññu*. The Vibhanga says ‘a man able to understand what is well said and what is wrongly said, what is wicked and what is not wicked.’ ” *Cf.* Jātaka, No. 40, *viññuta*. It is said of the Boddhisattva that in a former birth “ by the time he was come to years of discretion, being barely sixteen years old, he had made himself perfect in all his accomplishments.” *Cf.* Jātaka, No. 55 : “ When the prince was come to years of discretion, and was sixteen years old.”

Additional evidence against child-marriage may be adduced from the *dictum* which is found in the Dhammapada Commentary for this apparently points in the same direction.[1] The great merchant, Ghosaka, Sāmāvatī's adoptive father, refused to give her to the king at his request, declaring: " We householders do not give young girls (*mayam gahapatikā nāma kumārikā . . . na dema*) for fear that people will say that they are maltreated and ill-used." Whether this was merely a ruse on Ghosaka's part to retain Sāmāvatī in his own household, or whether she had not really reached the marriageable age, or whether the king was not actually asking for her in marriage, is matter of conjecture. From internal evidence it is perhaps safe to assume that she had reached years of discretion; for when she had persuaded Ghosaka to send her to the king, he " raised her to the dignity of chief consort." We may therefore assume that Ghosaka was covering his disinclination to part with her in a generalisation—which, however, not all instances confirm.

In the Vedic days, though a maiden and a lover might unite themselves through love,[2] the usual course was for the father to choose the girl's husband and to give her in marriage. According to Baudhāyāna, he should do this before his daughter had reached the age of puberty;[3] but if he failed, she might, after having waited for his order for three years, " choose for herself in the fourth year a husband (of) equal (rank)."[4]

With the greater independence attained by women under Buddhism, the father's responsibility for the selection of his daughter's husband lapsed to some extent, and the girls themselves came to have more voice in the matter. This is borne out by the case of the princess Kaṇhā,[1] who asked her mother to persuade her father to hold an assembly "to choose me a husband." This, according to Cowell,[2] was the *svayamvara*,[3] or "the public choice of a husband by a princess from a number of suitors assembled for the purpose." When the girl chose, she sometimes used the word *gaṇhāmi*, meaning "I take (or seize) him," not "I choose" him. Since this custom receives no notice in the Vedic Concordance,[4] it must be concluded that it does not go so far back as the Vedic days. This nominal freedom was much restricted by the strength of the family feeling, and girls usually married in accordance with their parents' wishes, and seldom against them.

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[1] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 21-23.

[2] This is the Gandharva-rite. Āpastamba, ii., 5. 11, 20.

[3] Baudhāyāna, iv., 1. 11 ; Āpastamba, ii., 5. 11, 15.

[4] Baudhāyāna, iv., 1. 11, 12, 14.

At the same time it is impossible to believe that there were no fathers who did not exercise their parental authority. In the Therīgāthā Commentary the phrase "giving their daughter in marriage" occurs several times. The intention of this phrase probably is not that the contract should necessarily be concluded without the daughter's approbation, far less against her wishes; for all that Indian parents usually desired was that a daughter should lead a happy married life; they therefore exercised as wise a control as possible in order to secure this. It probably means that the girl was handed on to one guardian after another, or, without stretching the meaning too far, from one owner to another.

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[1] Jātaka, No. 536. The word used, Jātaka, v., p. 426, is *vāremi*, from *vāreti*, to ask in marriage, *vārapeti*, to induce someone to choose a wife. *Cf.* Jātaka, iv., p. 289, *vārapetva*, *vārapeti*.

[2] Jātaka Trans., vol. v., p. 226, note 5.

[3] Defined by Lanman, *Sanskrit Reader*, 5th ed., Boston, 1906, as "self-choice, especially the free choice of a husband, which was allowed to girls of the warrior-caste." Macdonell, *Sanskrit Dictionary*, has "self-choice, the election of a husband by a princess or daughter of a Kshatriya at a public assembly of suitors held for the purpose."

[4] Bloomfield, *Vedic Concordance*, Harvard Oriental Series, X., Cambridge, Mass., 1906.

THE DAUGHTER

Parents, on occasion, took steps to preserve the reputation of the family, and in the Dhammapada Commentary instances are recorded of girls who were immured in their parents' house. It was said that when girls reach the age of sixteen "they burn and long for men,"[1] and sometimes parents feared that before they could bring their daughter the man of their choice, she might elope with some undesirable person, as Paṭācārā did.[2] Although probably such precautions could only have been taken by the wealthy owners of the seven-storied mansions, and could not have been common, the records of them tend to prove that girls had the right and the will to make their own choice rather than that their parents always made it for them. Nor did safeguards eliminate all risks. Occasionally the daughter of the house might stoop to intimacy with a slave, as the woman who became the mother of "Roadling" the Greater and the Less[3] is said to have done; for "she was maddened with the madness of youth and lusting for a man." A fantastic story is told in one of the Jātakas[4] of a girl who, although not shut up in a tower, was kept in almost unbelievable ignorance of worldly matters. One day, as she was looking down from an upper storey upon the street, she saw a hunchback. Because her nurse had told her that in the cow tribe a hump denotes royalty, by analogy she thought that this must be a royal man. She is said to have disguised herself, collected the best of her belongings, and set off with him. Her instinct seems to have been to circumvent her parents, and to gratify herself without stopping to obtain their sanction, which, in all probability, she felt would not have been forthcoming.

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[1] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 102-103.

[2] Therīgāthā Cmy. on xlvii.

[3] Theragāthā, ccxxxi., ccxxxvi.; Dhp. Cmy. on verse 25; and Jātaka Cmy. on 4, where the story is not so fully given.

[4] Jātaka, 232.

Even boys are spoken of as marrying with their parents' consent,[1] and parents seem sometimes to have proposed a certain alliance for their son.[2] How much more so is this to be expected in the case of girls; and our expectations are fully corroborated by a number of examples:[3] it will be sufficient to quote the story of Magandiyā, the daughter of a brahmin who lived in the Kuru country.[4] The story also incidentally shows that fathers were not always obliged to take the initiative in seeking a husband for their daughters, but that sometimes the suitors proclaimed their desire, and came, or sent and asked, for the daughter's hand in marriage.[5] The evidence for these important customs, no less than for a proud father's painstaking endeavours, is all compressed into one short sentence: "Now her father was unable to find a husband who was worthy of her; and although the scions of all the great families in the land asked for her hand, her father sent them all away, reviling them and saying, 'You are not worthy of my daughter.'"

The arrangement of a marriage bond was a strictly family affair. No soothsayers or astrologers were called in, either to approve of the union, or to cast a day for the celebration of the ceremony. Such measures were resorted to by the followers of the Naked Ascetics,[6] but not by the true followers of Gotama, whose keyword was "What do the stars matter? . . . 'Tis luck itself is luck's own star."[7] Buddhism was so consistently unshakable in its aversion from superstition that those Samāna-Brahmans who gave "advice touching the taking in marriage or the giving in marriage"[8] were said to gain their livelihood by "low arts and lying practices."[1] Against such deceptions Gotama resolutely set his face.

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[1] Theragāthā Cmy. on viii.
[2] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 1; on verses 219-220.
[3] *E.g.*, Therīgāthā Cmy. on lxxii., lxxiii.
[4] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 21-23.
[5] Therīgāthā Cmy. on liv., lxiv.
[6] Jātaka Cmy. on 49.
[7] Jātaka, 49.
[8] Tevijjasutta, ch. ii., 6; S.B.E., xi.

There can be no doubt that fathers were expected to present their daughters with a wedding-portion. This constituted the woman's inalienable property.[2] It always consisted of jewels and clothes, and sometimes also of money. Only among the exceptionally wealthy could other articles be added. Thus, for example, Visākhā's dowry, besides the stock requisites, comprised a stupendous quantity of gold, silver and copper dishes, ghee, husked rice, ploughshares and other implements, fifteen hundred female slaves, a great herd of cattle, and—most outstanding of all—her magnificent creeper *parure*.[3] Anāthapiṇḍika is said to have given splendid presents to his daughter, and to have sent her away in great state.[4] The King of Kosala's father, when he married his daughter to Bimbisāra, is said to have given her a village in Kāsī for bath-money.[5]

Bride-prices were evidently paid to the parents—a custom recorded in the Therīgāthā,

> "Then my father gave me for second time as bride,
> Content with half my husband's sire had paid."[6]

In the Milindapañha, the sentence "The little girl, the mere child, whom you chose in marriage and paid a price for, is one; the girl grown up to full age, whom I chose in marriage and paid a price for, is another,"[7] shows that the custom continued into later days, as it had existed in the days before the birth of Gotama.

The wedding ceremony was performed without the intervention of a priest, and was a purely civil or domestic affair. There were no rites, no vows, no oblations, no savour of superstition; there was merely joyousness and feasting at the house of the bride's parents, lasting over more or fewer days according to the means at their disposal. Sometimes gifts were made to the Confraternity of Almsmen.[1] When the festivities were over, the newly married girl went away with her husband to live in his parents' house in accordance with the joint-family system[2] customary in those times. Here she was to show humility and deference to her parents-in-law, so complete that a good and dutiful daughter-in-law (*vadhukā*) was held up to the almsmen as the model which they should follow in their effort after humility and trust.[3]

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[1] *Ibid.*

[2] *Cf.* Macdonell and Keith, *loc. cit.*, vol. i., p. 484: "It may be assumed that the husband appropriated the wife's dowry, if any."

[3] Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, p. 461.

[4] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 304.

[5] Jātaka Cmy. on 239, 283, 492.

[6] Therīgāthā, verse 420.

[7] Milindapañha, ii., 2, 6.

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[1] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 304.

[2] *Cf.* V., iv., p. 294. The household is here called *gahapatiputto*, which is described in the Commentary as including children and brothers (*puttabhātaro*).

[3] Ang., ii., 78; *cf.* Macdonell and Keith, *loc. cit.*, vol. i., p. 484, " the wife on her marriage exercises authority over her father-in-law, her husband's brothers, and her unmarried sisters." But he goes on to say in a footnote (No. 103, p. 484) " In Av. xiv., 2, 26, the daughter-in-law is to be ' wealful ' (*śambhūḥ*) to her father-in-law, and ' pleasant ' (*syonā*) to her mother-in-law, which is correct on either theory of her position as a daughter or a mistress."

CHAPTER III

THE WIFE

DURING the Buddhist epoch the general practice of marriage was monogamous, as it had been in the Vedic age.[1] At the same time there was no hard-and-fast rule, and no condemnation of polygamy. Public opinion on the subject was fluid, and meted out neither praise nor blame. It was inured to the existence of polygamy as a customary right of kings and nobles, and of anyone who could afford to support more than one wife.[2] It is not apparent that there was any limit to the number of wives that a man might have; but there is strong evidence to show that, with certain exceptions of a stock type, most men did in fact limit themselves to one.

The exceptions are to be found among the wealthy: among kings, nobles and merchants. Thus Pasēnadi had at least five wives: Mallikā, who was his chief queen, Vāsabhā,[3] Ubbirī,[4] Somā and Sakulā;[5] Udena had Sāmāvatī as his chief consort, Vasuladattā[6] as another queen-consort, and Magandiyā.[7] Bimbisāra's queens are mentioned;[1] they included Khemā,[2] who became his queen-consort, the Videha princess, sometimes called Kosala-devā, who was the sister of Pasēnadi,[3] and Chellana.[4] Abhirūpa-Nandā's mother[5] was the chief wife of Khemaka of the noble Sakyan clan (since there were no caste regulations to be followed, the chief wife would in all probability have been the first wife to be married); and the three brothers who were householders and evidently prosperous merchants, Culla Kāḷa, Majjhima Kāḷa and Mahā Kāḷa, had respectively two, four, and eight wives.[6] Contemporary with these was the brahmin who had "forty wives equal in rank."[7]

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[1] Āpastamba, ii. 5. 11, 12-14.

[2] *Cf.* Macdonell and Keith, *loc. cit.*, vol. i., p. 478. "A Vedic Indian could have more than one wife. This is clearly proved by many passages in the Rig-Veda. . . . The king regularly has four wives attributed to him; the Mahiṣī, the Parivṛktī, the Vāvātā and the Pālāgalī. The Mahiṣī appears to be the chief wife, being the first one married, according to the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa. The Parivṛktī, 'the neglected,' is explained by Weber and Pischel as one that has had no son. The Vāvātā is 'the favourite,' while the Pālāgalī is, according to Weber, the last of the court officials. . . . The evidence points to the wife first wedded alone being a wife in the fullest sense."

[3] Majjhima, ii., 110.

[4] Therīgāthā Cmy. on xxxiii.

[5] Majjhima, ii., 125.

[6] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 21-23.

[7] MV., viii., 1, 15.

In the Jātakas a curious story represents polygyny as the natural course to adopt in the following circumstances.[8] Four suitors wooed the four daughters of a certain brahmin. One of the suitors was virtuous, one noble, one beautiful, and one elderly. It seems as if it would have been a simple proposition for the brahmin to have allotted one of his daughters to each of the suitors. But he only entertained the thought of selecting one suitor and presenting him with all four daughters. It is said that he told Gotama of his difficulty in choosing, and far from being discouraged in this polygynous venture, he elicited from the Teacher his own predilection for virtue.

At the same time there is evidence to show that polygyny was by no means always the practice, even among the wealthy. The four sons of the *mahāsāla* (magnate, millionaire), among whom he had divided his fortune, seem to have had only one wife each.[9]

The less wealthy are sometimes spoken of as having a second wife. Four cases are mentioned in the

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[1] Therīgāthā, lii.; Apadāna, vol. ii., p. 543 ff.; Therīapadāna, No. 18.

[2] Therīgāthā, lii.

[3] Jātakas, 239, 283.

[4] Jacobi, Jaina Sutras, I., xii.-xv.

[5] Therīgāthā Cmy., on xix.

[6] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 7-8.

[7] Dialogues, ii., 245.

[8] Jātaka, 200.

[9] Samy. Nik., vii., 2, § 4.

Vinaya.[1] Further light is thrown on the incidence of the practice by Kisā-Gotamī's description of woman's lot as "woeful when sharing homes with other wives (*sapattikaṃ pi dukkhaṃ*)";[2] a sentiment fully endorsed by Uppalavaṇṇā,[3] who found herself living in enmity with her own mother (*ubho mātā ca dhītā ca mayaṃ āsuṃ sapattiyo*), the two of them "bound to one man." The Nāga woman was well aware that her temper could not stand the strain of being a co-wife, and refused to be put into that position by warning her husband that "the anger of a co-wife is a serious thing."[4] It is small wonder, then, that a woman might wish for one of the five conditions, "hard to be won by a woman who has wrought no merit. . . . Born in a proper (*paṭirūpa*) family, gone (as wife) to a proper family, may I dwell at home without a rival (*asapattī*, another wife)."[5]

The most usual reason for taking a second wife was the barrenness of the first wife. This step continued to be regarded as justifiable; partly, doubtless, because the Hindu tradition of the necessity for sons could not easily be uprooted—public opinion being very hard to move—partly, also, because of the strength of the family's interest in its own perpetuity, baldly expressed in the platitude "without children a family dies out."[6] If a wife were barren her husband could either put her away,[7] as Bandhula, the commander-in-chief of the army at Kusinara attempted to do with Mallikā,[8] or he could procure another wife while retaining the first.

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[1] V., iii., pp. 83, 84.

[2] Therīgāthā, lxiii.

[3] *Ibid.*, lxiv.

[4] Jātaka, 543.

[5] Saṃy. Nik., XXXVII, iii., 3, § 32. The word *sapatnī* occurs in the Rig-Veda in the sense of co-wife. Macdonell and Keith, *loc. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 424.

[6] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 5.

[7] *Cf.* Manu, ix., 81: "A barren wife may be superseded in the eighth year; she whose children (all) die in the tenth, she who bears only daughters in the eleventh."

[8] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 47; *cf.* Jātaka Cmy. on 465.

In the latter contingency the first wife might sometimes be afraid that if the second turned out to be fruitful, then she herself would be treated as a slave,[1] or would not inherit the property.[2]

The Dhammapada Commentary,[3] in repeating a story told in the Vinaya,[4] appears to suggest that a husband might take a second wife, if his first came to him empty-handed. Both agree in saying that while a laywoman, Kāṇā, was at her mother's house, her husband sent a messenger to her three times to say that he desired her to return to him. The third time he sent, he added that if she did not come, he would marry another wife—a threat which he carried out later, since she failed to return to him. For on each occasion her immediate departure was hindered by her mother, who said that she would cook a cake so that her daughter might not go empty-handed. This proved to be the girl's undoing. For each time the cake was ready her departure was prevented by a stream of almsmen who poured into the house, having passed on to one another the news that the laywoman was cooking cakes and rice-cakes (*pūva*) and giving them to eat. In this way they accounted for every cake as it was fried, and Kāṇā could not save one to take to her husband. She was indeed in a quandary: her husband had sent her definite commands, but her fear of not relieving the almsmen's wants, and so of losing an opportunity of storing up merit for herself, deterred her from her duty of wifely obedience.

It is to be supposed that, since a husband usually took his bride home with him after the wedding, Kāṇā had gone on a visit to her mother, and was not being sent to her husband for the first time. This is corroborated by the Jātaka version, which states that "Kāṇā was married to a man of the same caste in another village, and some errand or other made her go to see her mother."[1]

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[1] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 5.

[2] V., iii., p. 83.

[3] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 82.

[4] V., iv., p. 79.

The Dhammapada Commentary appears to interpret this story to mean that if her mother sent her daughter empty-handed to her husband, "in accordance with a precept laid down by the Teacher in such cases" he might take to himself another wife. But no such precept as this is attributed to Gotama, either in the Vinaya or in any other part of the texts. Hence it appears as if this attempt to justify Kāṇā's husband for marrying another wife was invented either as a new reason for allowing a man to do so, or (because it does not stress her disobedience to his commands), as a counterstroke to Brahminism, which, following Manu, allowed a man to marry another wife at once if his first were disobedient.

In a conversation with Gotama the deva is represented as saying, "best among wives is the maiden nobly-bred,"[2] to which Gotama is made to reply, "best among wives is she that best ministers." Buddhaghosa, in his Commentary, remarks: "Among other wives (*sesa-*) whether in one household or generally is not clear." The very fact that the meaning could be called in question might be used as an argument to emphasise the acceptance of this practice as one of the features of the society of the day.

Polyandry, on the other hand, was in all probability absent. If it existed at all, it must have been extremely infrequent. No mention is made of it in the canonical literature. There is merely one reference to it, and that is in the Jātakas and therefore late. In the Kuṇāla Jātaka,[3] the princess Kaṇhā is said to have had five husbands at the same time,[4] and

> "Insatiate still she lusted yet for more
> And with a hump-backed dwarf she played the whore."

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[1] Jātaka Cmy. on 137. [2] Saṃy. Nik., i., 2, § 4. [3] Jātaka, 536.

[4] Their names are given; *cf.* Draupadi in the Mahābhārata, who married the five Paṇḍu princes.

This short account of her, which appears to form part of an exposition on the faults of womankind, is recorded in the Jātaka, in conjunction with reflections about other women who went wrong, as a warning to men to beware their kind, which was said to partake more of the murderess than of the strumpet. For the princess Kaṇhā sinned with the hunchback slave and told him that she would slay the five Pandu princes whom, in fulfilment of a boon he had promised her, her father had allowed her to marry. This isolated case is such a glaring exception to the general rule that we doubt whether it had any basis in fact. When later in the same Jātaka it is said "one woman may have husbands eight . . . yet on a ninth she sets her will," this *dictum* seems to be employed to emphasise the insatiability of women,[1] rather than the occurrence of polyandry.

It is highly probable that the custom did not obtain at the time of the rise of Buddhism. It was not Vedic,[2] and it was, as Westermarck says,[3] constantly opposed by Brahminism. Yet in the face of almost entirely negative evidence for its existence, a sanction for it might possibly be found in one of the verses of the Rig-Veda (x., 109, 89): "And when a woman has had ten former husbands, not brahmans, if a priest take her hand, it is he alone who is her husband. It is a brahman only who is her husband, and not a Rajanya or a Vaisya." From knowledge of the Vedic beliefs and customs, it seems more likely that the ten husbands referred to were husbands in other existences, and not previous husbands in this existence. The Aitareya Brahmaṇa (iii., 23) contains a statement which firmly denies polyandry, and clearly refers only to this existence: "For one man has many wives, but one wife has not many husbands at the same time." She was, according to the standard of thought at the time, the property of one man only.

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[1] Three other things are said to be insatiable : the ocean, kings and brahmins.

[2] Macdonell and Keith, *loc. cit.*, vol. i., p. 479 : "Polyandry is not Vedic. There is no passage containing any clear reference to such a custom." Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage*, 5th ed., London, 1921, vol. iii., p. 143 ; *cf.* C.H.I., vol. i., p. 88 ; Winternitz, *Die Frau in den Indischen Religionen*, vol. i., p. 51, where he states that he cannot believe that the obscure passage at Chand., iv., 4, 2, refers to polyandry.

[3] Westermarck, *loc. cit.*, quoting Jolly, *Recht und Sitte*, p. 48.

From a reading of the Pāli classics, it is therefore to be concluded that monogamy prevailed under Buddhism. Polygyny was not usual among the ordinary people, and if it obtained on account of particular recognised circumstances, it was not condemned. It was customary among members of the princely families; otherwise the wealthy observed no uniform principle. Polyandry was practically non-existent.

A certain amount of literature survives from which some of the normal qualities and characteristics of a woman's married life may be deduced. The passages concerned with her position as co-wife have already been mentioned. Far more numerous are those which relate to her position as her husband's sole wife; and these must now engage our attention.

It is said that Gotama described the relations of husband and wife as follows:[1]

> . "In five ways should a wife as western quarter[2] be ministered to by her husband: by respect, by courtesy, by faithfulness, by handing over authority to her, by providing her with adornment.
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> "In these five ways does the wife, ministered to by her husband as the western quarter, love him: her duties are well performed, by hospitality

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[1] Sigālôvādasutta, verse 30.

[2] Domestic cares come later into a man's life, just as the west holds the later day-light. Dialogues, iii., p. 180, note 4.

> to the kin of both, by faithfulness, by watching over the goods he brings, and by skill and industry in discharging all her business."

It is clear from this statement that the wife should have respect shown to her, not merely as the wife of a sacrificer,[1] but as a member of a household. In another passage it is said that just as the brahmins have sacred fires which have to be honoured, esteemed, treasured and revered, so the householder has his sacred fire which he must care for and preserve well—namely, his wife and children and servants.[2] In antithesis to this, care of the husband is sometimes put first among the wife's obligations.[3] As mistress of the establishment she was to be given the honourable duties of undertaking headship and shouldering responsibility. She was to care for those dear to her husband, perform the domestic duties properly, take charge of the servants and tend them if they were ill; and she was to mind her husband's treasures, gold and silver. She should be virtuous and observe the five precepts of morality. As a lay-believer she should take her refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. One passage even goes so far as to add that she should be filled with insight.[4] A formidable array of expectations—and yet they were often fulfilled.

The wife's share in the domestic life, with which almsgiving and learning the Dhamma were blended, was important and full, and it seems fairly clear from the texts that she had a considerable amount of authority. This was the ideal position of the wife; but, like all ideals, as it was worked out in practice, it yielded infinite variations. An allusion to the wife as a foot-minister,[5] a symbol of the most utter humility, makes it clear that her prestige was kept in check; and it appears from Gotama's reputed saying, "Best among wives is she that best ministers,"[1] that the old notions of one-sided service and respect were still in the ascendant. And indeed they were. As the Sigālôvādasutta shows, the relentless bonds of matrimony chained the woman faster than the man. Because of their heavier demands on her, they laid greater chances for failure at her door; but they also gave her the opportunity for supreme abnegation, magnanimity and tenderness. If men's minds had not been already focussed on motherhood, resplendent with its dignity and self-surrendering devotion still shining on out of a forgotten past, the wife would have bid fair to rival the mother as the type of compassionate and heroic womanhood.

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[1] Baudhayāna, i., 6, 13. 5 ; i., 7, 15. 10, 17, 26.

[2] Ang., iv., 44. [3] Ang., iii., 35 ; iv., 265. [4] Ang., iv., 273.

[5] In *Abhidhānappadīpika-sūcī*. *Cf.* Saṃy. Nik., iv. 3, § 5, where Māra's daughters say they would minister at Gotama's feet. *Pāda-paricārikā* is defined in the *P.T.S. Dictionary* as "serving on one's feet—*i.e.*, a wife."

For the Vedic notions of the dominance of man were not yet dead, and woman had not yet grown up in his thoughts to a position of equality with him. She was still often regarded as his inferior and his possession—"never fit for independence," as Baudhayāna says.[2] In the Vinaya[3] there is a heterogeneous list of ten kinds of wives:[4] those bought for money, those living together voluntarily, those who are to be enjoyed or made use of occasionally,[5] those who have given cloth (*paṭa*),[6] those who have the quality of providing the house with (a bowl of) water, those who have put up a head-cushion (in order to carry vessels on their head),[7] those who are slaves and wives, those who are artisans and wives, those who are flag-brought,[8] and those who are temporary or momentary wives.[9]

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[1] Saṃy. Nik., i., 2, § 4.

[2] Baudhayāna, ii., 2, 3. 45.

[3] V., iii., 139, 140.

[4] *Bhariyā*, a wife; lit. one who is supported.

[5] A kept woman, *bhogavāsinī*, "living in property."

[6] *I.e.*, to the almspeople, a merit-working deed.

[7] Probably symbolical of their readiness to fetch and carry.

[8] *Dhajāhaṭā*, prisoner of war.

[9] *Muhuttikā.*

No clue is given, to the relative value, if any, ascribed to these classes. The qualities of servitude and dependence are distributed among them. A list given in the Anguttara[1] suggests a more regular sequence of ascending worth from the husband's point of view. It does not include the various modes of getting a wife, as does the Vinaya, but concentrates on the various classes of persons that the wife may resemble. If she resembles a murderer, a thief, or a master, she is said to be bad and will go to hell; but if she resembles a mother, a sister, a friend, or a slave, she is good and will attain bliss. It is not at all clear whether it is meant that the slave-type is best, though this might be concluded from the moral of the story of Sujātā,[2] which contains this list; for on being tamed by the Master, she is recorded to have said that she wished to belong to the slave-type.

But it is very likely that the husband's ideal would be more nearly approached when his wife combined some of the attributes of all four—although, in the case of Isidāsī,[3] this availed her nought. She embodied many kinds of wife: the mother-type, caring for her husband in many ways as a mother would;[4] the sister-type, respecting him as "young sisters reverence to elders pay";[5] the friend-type, "giving up her life to him";[6] and the slave-type, "true-hearted, bending to her husband's will."[7] Yet in spite of her impeccable devotion, her husband could not get over his dislike for her. She did everything for him that lay in her power. Indeed the expression of a wife's punctiliousness in administering her multifarious duties finds its culmination in the lament of Isidāsī.[8] Her verse contains such a complete and vivid picture of some of the day's recurrent tasks, and of the respectful and humble attitude still expected of the wife, that it is, as it were, an initiation into the daily round of the wives of old, and gives us a more intimate vision of it than does any other passage:

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[1] Ang., iv., 92, repeated Jātaka Cmy. on 269.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Therīgāthā, lxxii.

[4] Jātaka Cmy. on 269.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] Therīgāthā, lxxii.

> " My salutation morn and eve I brought
> To both the parents of my husband, low
> Bowing my head and kneeling at their feet,
> According to the training given me.
> My husband's sisters and his brothers too,
> And all his kin, scarce were they entered when
> I rose in timid zeal and gave them place.
> And as to food, or boiled or dried, and drink,
> That which was to be stored I set aside,
> And served it out and gave to whom 'twas due.
> Rising betimes, I went about the house,
> Then with my hands and feet well cleansed I went
> To bring respectful greeting to my lord,
> And taking comb and mirror, unguents, soap,
> I dressed and groomed him as a handmaid might.
> *I* boiled the rice, *I* washed the pots and pans;
> And as a mother to her only child,
> So did I minister to my good man.
> For me, who with toil infinite thus worked,
> And rendered service with a humble mind,
> Rose early, ever diligent and good,
> For me he nothing felt save sore dislike."

The Dhaniya Sutta[1] throws light on the value which a husband attached to obedience in his wife. The herdsman Dhaniya is represented as congratulating himself on a number of circumstances which engender worldly security, and among them he counts it as a boon that " my wife is obedient, not wanton; . . . for a long time she has been living together (with me); she is winning, and I hear nothing wicked of her."[2] He evidently appreciated his wife's obedience; and, according to his outlook—which was typical perhaps of the uncultured people of his day—this raised rather than lowered her in his estimation; so that she (and possibly the children) became included in a surrender, a plea and a hope:

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[1] Dhaniyasutta, S.B.E., x.

[2] *Ibid.*, verse 5.

> "No small gain, indeed, has accrued to us since we have seen Bhagavat; we take refuge in thee, O (thou that art) endowed with the eye (of wisdom); be thou our Master, O great Muni.
>
> "Both my wife and I are obedient; if we lead a holy life before Sugata,[1] we shall conquer birth and death, and put an end to pain."[2]

This was not selfishness in which no place could be found for the wife's happiness; but tender thought for her, and the belief that her obedience to the Tathāgata would, in the same way as his own, result in salvation.

It might be argued that the obedience of the women led them, in some cases, to imitate their husbands and to believe blindly what they believed. Or it might be argued that the husbands assumed that their wives, who were part of them, and belonged to them, would unhesitatingly do their bidding. Either of these two hypotheses, though it might not entirely explain Dhaniya's specific mention of the blessings that were to fall to his wife, would account for the Brahman Pokkharasādi's betaking himself with his sons and his wife and his people to Gotama, the Dhamma, and the Order.[3]

In matters of believing, in view of the fact that Gotama is recorded to have said that women are capable of gaining arahanship,[4] it is only to be expected that cases will be recorded of men and their wives who were established in one or other of the Four Paths. It is, for example, said that the Teacher "perceived that the brahmin Magandiya and his wife possessed the dispositions requisite for the attainment of the Fruit of the Third Path," in which they were established at the conclusion of the story.[1] But from the story of Great Wealth,[2] it is apparent that husband and wife were not always established in the same Path. It is said that if in the prime of life he had not acted so foolishly and squandered all his fortune, but "had retired from the world and had become an almsman," he would have attained to arahanship, and his wife would have been established in the Fruit of the Third Path. If he had been in the middle years, he would have attained the Fruit of the Third Path, and his wife would have been established in the Fruit of the Second Path. If in the latter years, he would have attained to the Fruit of the Second Path, and his wife would have been established in the Fruit of Conversion. Here the status of the wife is made to depend on that of her husband—in very truth her emblem and her sign.[3] Her prowess would have been but a paler reflection of his, and had he joined the Order as a means of entering on the Paths, it is demonstrated that she would not have escaped from corresponding but inferior religious experiences. I think that this passage refers simply to the straightforward dependence of the woman on the man for her position, and has no hidden metaphysical meaning regarding a bond of spiritual union where two minds become as one mind. Such mysteries meet with no inquiry and no discussion in Buddhist philosophy; they are set aside in the interest of the adjustment of worldly concerns.

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[1] The Well-farer, one of Gotama's most common epithets. For description of Sugata, see Ang., ii., 147. Rendered by Mr. Woodward in his recent translation of the Saṃyutta-Nikāya, Kindred Sayings, vol. iv., 1927, P.T.S., "happy one."

[2] Dhaniyasutta, verses 13, 14.

[3] Dialogues, vol. i., p. 135, S.B.B.

[4] CV., x., 1, 3.

Foremost among her marital obligations, the duty of wifely devotion persisted, a legacy from the days of brahmin ascendancy. It was not instilled by Buddhist teaching, as it survives, to nearly the same degree as it was in pre-Buddhist days. In the records there is nothing corresponding to the sentiment—so often to be met with in Manu—that a wife should serve her husband as if he were a god. Even as late as the Jātakas it was said "she of her lord who stands in fear is no true wife."[1] A drastic step to secure temporary freedom at least was taken by Uttarā, who had married a "heretic."[2] On her own initiative, though with her husband's consent, she arranged with the courtesan Sirimā to be his mistress for the space of a fortnight, and absented herself from him for this time in order that she might give alms and listen to the Dhamma. Yet traces of the old servitude of women still linger on, ineradicable it would seem. The last of the five special woes of a woman[3] is said to be that she has to wait upon a man (*pāricariyaṃ upeti*), that is to say on her father, her husband or her son. This woe is slipped into the list as though it were inevitable. However disagreeable it might be to the women, yet because it was the custom of centuries, it was accepted as a burden to be borne, no more alterable than the natural woes of the female sex. Nor was this all. A wife was expected, under pain of being reborn in the Waste, the Way of Woes, the Downfall, in Purgatory,[4] not to allow her heart to be haunted by greed, stinginess,[5] or by jealousy,[6] as the Commentary explains, of her husband's doings. Apparently she should remain uncritical of his behaviour, and should not reprimand him. Further if she were haunted by sensuality or lust,[7] if she were faithless, or grudging, envious, stingy, an adulteress, immoral, of small knowledge, indolent, or muddle-headed,[8] shameless, unscrupulous, wrathful, or of weak wisdom,[9] she would be liable to be reborn in an unhappy state. But if she were the reverse of all these, it was said that after death she would be reborn in the Happy Lot.[1]

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[1] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 21-23.

[2] *Ibid.* on verses 155-156.

[3] Saṃy. Nik., i., 8, § 2.

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[1] Jātaka, 537.

[2] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 223.

[3] Saṃy. Nik., XXXVII., iii., § 3 (3). *Cf.* above, p. 28.

[4] *Apāya, duggati, vinipāta, niraya.*

[5] Saṃy. Nik., XXXVII., iii., 1, 4 (4). *Cf.* Ang., i., 281.

[6] *Ibid.* [7] *Ibid.*

[8] Saṃy. Nik., XXXVII., iii., 1, §§ 6-13.

[9] *Ibid.*, §§ 15-24.

In all probability the majority of wives devoted themselves entirely to their husband's service; for married women, except among the very poor, did not engage upon extra-domestic occupations. It is impossible to say exactly how far they availed themselves of the comparatively new institution of the Order of Almswomen. Practically their husband's consent was necessary before they could take the tremendous step, altering the whole of their lives, of entering on homelessness; and there are but few records of women who adopted the conventual state if their husbands did not.[2] Some longed to do so, but relinquished even this most ardent hope in order to continue their wifely ministrations.[3]

A touching illustration of the unstinted devotion of a wife at a crisis in her own life and that of her husband is presented by the series of ruses invented by the queen who is known as the mother of Ajātasatthu, in order to save her husband from being starved to death in prison by their son, whose destiny, it was said, was to be a parricide.[4] She made copious use of the permission her son granted her to visit his father in prison, and was full of resource in smuggling in food to him; first in a golden bowl, next in the flap of her gown, then in her headdress, then in her golden shoes, until each of these devices were successively detected and stopped by the order of her son. Finally she bathed in scented water and smeared her body with honey for King Bimbisāra to lick; but after this was discovered she was allowed to go to him only once again; and therefore there would be no more food for the king. On her laſt visit she told him that he had nourished his own enemy, and craved for his forgiveness if there were any blame in her. The only blame which there could have been would have lain in her lack of determination to override the king's wishes not to have the son killed at birth. She may have realised that she was not a dominating woman by nature, and not a maſterful dowager. She is not represented as pleading with her son for the life of his father, the man whom she adored; and it may have been that her knowledge of her own limitations of character made her refrain from embarking on a task which, in view of all the circumſtances, seemed hopeless from the outset. It is said that after Ajātasatthu had murdered Bimbisāra the queen soon died of grief.

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[1] *Cf.* Baudhayāna, ii., 2, 3. 47: "Those (women) who strive (to do what is) agreeable to their husbands will gain heaven."

[2] Therīgāthā, i., lii.

[3] *Ibid.*, i., xvii., lii.

[4] Sumaṅgalavilāsinī, i., p. 136. *Cf.* Dialogues, ii., 78, note; Jātaka Cmy. on 239; *Ibid.* on 283. She is identified in both these contexts as Kosala Devī; *Ibid.* on 530.

Such were some of the women who have won immortality for themselves by reason of their unselfishness. Their devotion seemed to know no bounds, whether it were based on obedience or on love.

By the time that the Jātakas and their Commentaries were written down, the brief hey-day of Indian women was already passed. The reviving anti-feminism has left its mark in sentiments not ſtressed in the earlier literature, but which in the Jātakas cryſtallise into ſtories calculated to show the ingratitude, deception, untruſtworthiness and sensuality of women.[1] But some infrequent exceptions have resiſted the hands of the editors. Prominent among these is the ſtory of the valiant wife who declared to the robber chief who accoſted her and her husband as they were journeying, that if he or his band murdered her husband, she would kill herself. In this way she begged him off and saved her own honour.[2]

A wife who combined the two qualities of chaſtity and devotion was looked upon as a jewel both under

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[1] *E.g.*, Jātakas, 61, 62, 461, 472.

[2] Jātaka Cmy. on 266.

Brahmanism and under Buddhism. She was not often the exception; she was the actual and the ideal, so matchless that she was only comparable to the faith. Speaking of an almsman who threw up the homeless life for the life of a householder, Gotama is said to have said: " In bygone days he lost a jewel of a wife, just as now he has lost the jewel of the faith."[1]

Before the days of the Jātakas there was admiration for the wife, and less insistence on her servility and unreliability. The inclusion of the friend-type of wife is an acknowledgment of her comradeship. There is a beautiful passage in the Decay Suttas, where, in answer to the question, " What, here below, is the comrade supreme ?" Gotama is represented as answering in the next verse, " The wife is here below the comrade supreme."[2] The Commentary says that that is one " to whom a secret may be told that can be told to no-one else." The power to keep secrets is regarded as befitting in a wife.[3] This definition, narrow but honourable, finds its corroboration, justification and amplification in the Sigālôvādasutta, the Homily for Laymen; and there can be no doubt that Gotama recognised that the power of the wife had to be reckoned with in the home, for there she was no mere cipher. If she were possessed of the five powers—the power of beauty, of wealth, of kin, of sons (*puttā*), and virtue—it was said that she might dwell at home in confidence, overpowering her husband, and continuing to (*vattati*) get the better of him.[4] In the Anguttara the power of anger is ascribed to her, apart from the others.[5]

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[1] Jātaka Cmy. on 32.

[2] Saṃy. Nik., i., 6, § 4. *Cf.* Rājasūya, in Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, Rig-Veda Brāhmaṇas, trans., A. B. Keith, *Harvard Oriental Studies*, vol. xxv., p. 300; " a wife is a comrade." But in the introduction, p. 29, the translator adduces reasons for supposing that the Rājasūya is later than the rest of the Brāhmaṇas.

[3] Ang., i., 282.

[4] Saṃy. Nik., XXXVII., iii., §§ 25-27 (1-3).

[5] Ang., iv., 223.

The husband, on the other hand, is said to continue to get the better of her by virtue of the power of authority[1] alone, against which her powers could not prevail. Doubtless this monk-talk contains a germ of truth, and theoretically it would hold good. But practically many of the women appear to have acquired a position of command, and to have made themselves queen in their own homes.

One of the ways in which a wife's authority asserted itself was by sharing with her husband in the choice of careers for the children. If these thought of entering the Order, they had to obtain the consent of both their parents. One of the questions put at the Upasampadā Ceremony to both male and female entrants was: "Have your parents given their consent?"[2] That the children regularly secured this preliminary step is corroborated by many instances from the Thera-Therī-gāthā and other writings; for example, the case of the seventeen boys of whom Upāli was the head (*pāmokkha*) may be mentioned.[3] If they sometimes had fierce arguments with their parents,[4] children seldom defied them and dodged away to the almspeople.[5] The very fact that the mother's consent was demanded before her children were allowed to break with the household life reveals Gotama's sympathy with her for her possible loss, and also his fairness of mind, no less than his willingness to fall in with any reasonable wishes. It is a proof also of the high esteem in which the mother was held. By endowing her with willpower and authority equal to that of her husband, by crediting her with views which merited deep consideration, and by seeing in her a dignity rooted in her

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[1] Saṃy. Nik., XXXVII., iii., § 28 (4).

[2] MV., i., 54; CV., x., 17, 1.

[3] V., iv., p. 128.

[4] V., iii., 11-15; Majjhima, ii., 54 ff.; Jātaka Cmy. on 14, where Tissa is said to have followed Raṭṭhapāla's example and refused to take food; Therīgāthā, lxxiii.

[5] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 209-211.

qualities of mind, and not merely in her life as a child-bearer, a great psychological advance was made upon the customary notions; for until girls were married, they were no longer looked upon as the property of their father only, but also of their mother. The girl herself was not much better off, for in the disposal of her life she had still to adhere to the wishes and decisions of these guardians, and after she was married, to those of her husband; but the cult of the mother was ennobled by grafting on to it the co-operative power of the wife.

It was not only when there was the prospect of virtually losing a child that parents intervened. Both the mother and the father are not infrequently represented as considering the future career of a child when this is expected to be not a monastic but a worldly one. For example, Anāthapiṇḍika consulted with his wife before accepting the offer of the great merchant Ugga to wed his son to their daughter.[1] The mother and father of Great Wealth[2] saw no necessity for their son to do anything but enjoy his riches "according to his own good pleasure. Accordingly they instructed him in singing and the playing of musical instruments, and that was all the instruction he received." A similar course was adopted by the mother and father of a girl who was born in the same city,[3] Benares, "and they had her instructed only in dancing and singing." The account of the father and mother of Upāli,[4] and of the anxious thought which they expended in order to secure for him a "life of ease and without pain" after their death, also shows the woman as an individual whose opinion and counsel were sought, and whose decisions were obeyed.

Another passage[5] throws a curious side-light on the ground gained by women since the rise of Buddhism.

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[1] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 304.

[2] *Ibid.* on verses 155-156.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] MV., i., 49, 1-3; V., iv., p. 128.

[5] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 24.

It is stated that "when plague breaks out, animals, from flies to cattle, are the first to die; after them slaves; after them the master and mistress of a household. So this disease attacked last of all the great merchant and his wife."

Householders (*gahapati*) and their wives also exercised co-equal authority in other affairs. Thus it is said that an almsman might not ask either of them for a robe at the wrong season; either might offer him the choice of materials, either might provide a set of robes in exchange for the robe-fund for the almsman.[1] As no distinction was made between the householder and his lady in the matter of distributing robes, there seems no doubt that women were able to hold property, in kind or in money, independently of their male relatives. It is true that Rāhula's mother is recorded to have said to him, "Ask him (your father) for your inheritance";[2] and Ghosaka bestowed all his property on his son in preference to his wife and daughter;[3] but there are other cases where the property was left to the wife.

Indeed such seeming inconsistencies only go to prove that there was as yet no hard and fast law of inheritance.[4] Bhaddā Kāpilānī,[5] although married, appears to have been the sole owner of her property; for it is said that when she renounced the world "she handed over her great wealth to her kinsfolk." Sundarī's father,[6] when leaving the household life and disposing of his property, passed over his wife in favour of his daughter. The story goes that the mother sought to deter Sundarī from following his example, by holding before her the lure of her inherited wealth: "All the wealth in this house belongs to you. You are the heiress of this family. Take up your heritage and enjoy it." This episode has its counterpart in stories in the Vinaya[1] and the Majjhma,[2] where both the parents are portrayed as trying to induce their sons, Sudinna and Raṭṭhapāla respectively, already almsmen, when paying visits to the dwelling of their own fathers (*sakapitu*), to secede from the Order. They were not slow to exhibit the wealth, and pointed to the separate portions, saying, "This is your mother's treasure (heap of wealth), this your father's, this your grandfather's."

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[1] Vinaya, Nissaggiya Pācittiya Dhamma, 6-9, 27.

[2] MV., i., 54, 1; and *cf.* Dhp. Cmy. on verses 13-14.

[3] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 21-23.

[4] Vasistha, S.B.E., xiv., p. xxvi, "females excluded from the succession to the property of males." At Baudhayāña, i., 5, 11. 11-15, women are not mentioned among the inheritors; *cf.* Baudhayāna ii., 2, 3. 44-46, where the Veda is quoted as declaring that "women are considered to be destitute of . . . a portion." But Āpastamba, ii., 6, 14. 4, says that (failing all other heirs) the daughter may take the inheritance; ii., 6, 14, 9, defines the wife's share.

[5] Therīgāthā Cmy. on xxxvii.

[6] *Ibid.*, Cmy. on lxix.

These cases—the gifts of the robes made to the almsmen by the householders' wives, and incidental references, as, for example, to the fabulous riches belonging to Visākhā[3] and administered by her—prove beyond all doubt that women were not limited to the enjoyment of their marriage dowry, but, independently of the men, had rights of tenure and administration over other forms of property. Some property was very likely held in common, but this is nowhere specified.[4]

The wife's influence did not stop at the threshold of the home but, through the men, permeated the whole of a society where religion was of as much account as government. Not allowed to sit on

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[1] V., iii., p. 16.

[2] Majjhima, ii., 63.

[3] Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, p. 461 ff., and see below p. 345 ff.

[4] *Cf.* Āpastamba, ii., 11, 29. 3. "Both the wife and the husband have power over (their) common property." Haradatta explains that "though this is so, still the wife cannot spend (money) without the consent of her husband, but the husband can do (so without the consent of his wife)." *Cf.* ii., 6, 14. 18: "It is not a theft if a wife expends money on occasions (of necessity) during her husband's absence."

Councils, not allowed to carry on trade[1] or to journey into foreign parts, even so they could not be ignored; and it was therefore better, more decent, more chivalrous, more reasonable to build up for them, so far as was possible, a position worthy of the veneration which they merited, and one inspiring to honour; to ascribe to them the gift, valued in Buddhist thought, of friendship and comradeship; and to put them in the light of genuine help-meets, rather than to relegate them to the position—shared in common with female animals—solely to exist as the bearers of children. It was an attempt to alter their position from one of subordination to the husband to one of equality with him; and it was only fair that these selfless women should be given credit openly, if only for a brief period in their history, for their model behaviour throughout the ages. As each of the partners of the marriage bond would then deserve the respect and admiration of the other, so greater mutual love might follow, and some of the foundations of happiness—reciprocal duties and a sharing of interests—might emerge in their proper proportions.

Indeed the occurrence of quarrels between husbands and wives is not often recorded. One is mentioned in the Vinaya,[2] but the cause is not given. The wife went away out of the house and asked an almsman whom she met if she might proceed with him. The husband pursued her, caught the almsman and gave him a good thrashing before the woman could assure him that he had not accosted her.

Domestic strife may have been largely averted by the humility and docility of the average wife. Even though balked in their desires, like Little Sturdy[3] and Dhammā,[4] others unrecorded may also have continued unmurmuring with their tasks. The scorn[5] they may have felt for their husbands blazed out comparatively rarely, maybe, into open rebellion. After all, the men were the money-makers. It was perhaps natural for a woman to despise her husband for his poverty, for who does not like to be comfortably off? Also for his drunkenness, stupidity, carelessness, for attending to every kind of business and for neglecting every duty towards her. But if the Indian wife despised her husband because he was ill and old, she must have been more hard-hearted than there is any evidence for believing.[1]

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[1] Ang., ii., 82. Women from the lowest caste were allowed to trade.

[2] V., iv., 132, 133.

[3] Therīgāthā, i.

[4] *Ibid.*, xvii.

[5] *Ibid.*, xxi.

Because her obedient habit of mind expressed itself in such a constant series of attentions and services, a large admixture of compassionate, vibrating[2] parental love sometimes blended itself with her conjugal love. Theoretically this was recognised in the wife who resembles the mother; and in practice the wife sometimes expressed this attitude by addressing her husband as *ayyaputta*.[3]

This wifely obedience, devotion, service and share in some of the common interests could not fail to influence men's attitude towards the women. If, theoretically, a man might despise his wife because she loved others but hated him, filched what he gained by honourable trade, was lazy, greedy and ill-tempered,[4] few in practice—as far as the records show—had any cause for doing so. On the contrary, they must have realised how great was the debt they owed their wives for their loyalty. Some sympathetic husbands attempted to acknowledge this: they furthered their wives' wishes, took their messages to Gotama, indulged their fancies, gave them money every day with which to buy flowers,[1] and—rather less conspicuously—gave them their consent to enter the Order. Kings are sometimes recorded to have granted boons to their queens, usually to mark their joy at the birth of a son.[2] There were husbands like Bimbisāra[3] and a brahmin convert[4] who were eager that their wives should participate in the truth made known by Gotama. But human nature being what it is, there were some women who suffered because their husbands were blatantly selfish, unregenerate creatures, like the Niggardly Kosiya, whom perhaps no amount of moral instruction could have saved. He ordered his wife to cook only one cake a day, in secret, for him to eat alone and in secret, and made no provision for her sustenance. There were husbands who hid their selfishness under the cloak of religion, abandoning their wives and entering the Order of Almsmen.[5] Doubtless many of them might have echoed the words ascribed to the Blessed One in the Cariya Piṭaka,[6]

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[1] Grounds on which a woman may despise her husband are given at Jātaka, No. 536.

[2] *Kampa*, trembling or vibrating towards.

[3] V., iv., p. 203; Majjhima ii., 64, 109. Translated most nearly by "*monsieur le fils*." *Cf.* Dialogues, ii., 96, where Ambapālī addresses both Gotama and the Licchavis in this way.

[4] Jātaka, 536.

> " 'Twas not through hatred of my children sweet,
> 'Twas not through hatred of my queen, Maddī,
> Thraller of hearts—not that I loved them less,
> But Buddhahood more, that I renounced them all."

That such words could be ascribed to Gotama is an example of the lengths to which monkish distortion could be carried; for it is the talk of those who feel themselves incapable of adequately facing a life rayed through with the normal affections.

Many husbands might have echoed the words of Nāgasena in the paragraph leading up to the citation of this verse, amplifying the reasons which might have restrained him from making this renunciation; for few would have subscribed to the bestowal of Vessantara's wife and children, a "gift . . . immeasurable, magnificent, unsurpassed, of what was near and dear to him, greatly beloved, cherished as his own life, his own children and his wife," on the Brahman.

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[1] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 21-23.
[2] Jātaka, 6.
[3] Therīgāthā, lii.
[4] Dialogues, vol. i., p. 135.
[5] Theragāthā, viii.; Therīgātha, xlv.
[6] Cariya Piṭaka, i., 9, 53; this whole story is given in Milindapañha, iv., 8, 10.

The men did not always consider the nature of the sacrifice which they were imposing on their wives, when they decided to enter the religious life; but remorse at the thought of the state of virtual widowhood to which his conduct had brought her, entered into Nanda's decision to secede from the Order.[1] When Gotama asked him his reason for his dissatisfaction with the higher life, he is said to have replied:

> "Reverend Sir, when I left my house, my noble wife Janapada-Kalyāṇī,[2] with hair half-combed, took leave of me, saying: 'Noble Sir, please return immediately.'
>
> "Reverend Sir, it is because I keep remembering her that I am dissatisfied with the religious life that I am now living; that I cannot endure to live the religious life any longer; that I intend to abandon the higher precepts and return to the lower life, the life of a layman."

Yet, as a rule, almsmen were not lured away from the higher life by retrospective qualms of conscience concerning their wives in their absence, or by remembering them with longing.[3] It was on the occasions when they went to visit at their old homes, or when the wives came to visit them at the vihāra with this purpose in their minds, that they recognised anew their physical charms; and terrified of capitulating, they either stood their ground,[4] and sometimes converted their wives,[5] or rushed out into the safety of the open.[6]

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[1] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 13-14.

[2] "Belle-of-the-Country."

[3] Jātaka Cmy. on 147; and *cf.* Cmy. on 207.

[4] Theragāthā Cmy. on x.; Udāna, Enlightenment, § 8.

[5] *Cf.* Theragāthā Cmy. on viii.; on cxciv.

[6] Theragāthā Cmy. on xxxiv.; on ccxxiii.

Grief at a wife's death is not a phenomenon which would have been of much interest to the recorders. They would have regarded it as a natural and normal reaction of those who, living in the world, were bound by a mighty fetter; but from their point of view they would have deplored it as denoting a wrong and muddled apprehension of reality. Its very commonness as a strand of human experience made it perhaps inappropriate to record. Hence it is not surprising that records of the grief of only three husbands have been included in this literature. Harita's[1] survives, as his reason for joining the almsmen; and Pasēnadi's[2] and Muṇḍa's[3] because they were famous kings. Events of Pasēnadi's reign are often chronicled; hence it is only to be expected that his lament for his queen Mallikā, beloved too by all his subjects, should also be inserted.

A wife's grief at her husband's death would naturally pass almost unrecorded, and little trace of it survives.[4]

The question of the remarriage of women who were not widows is one for which there is but meagre evidence; but the pieces that exist are direct and important. There is no indication in the texts that the cases which they describe were in fact isolated. Two appear to have been cases of actual remarriage, two others of possible remarriage. Isidāsī,[5] who has been so often referred to, married one husband after another. From the lack of contemporary comment on her conduct, it may be concluded that she was acting in conformity with public opinion rather than in opposition to it; that she was not adopting a course which was in any way unusual; and that in all probability there were other women who married again, but who were perhaps more fortunate in finding happiness with the second husband. The other cases bear out this interpretation. For example, the Dhammapada Commentary, in the sequel which it introduces to the story of Kāṇā[1] says that when her husband married another wife, she was taken as a daughter by the King, and later married by him to a great noble. A Sāvatthi woman "visited her own people's home, and they wanted to take her from her husband and marry her to someone else whom she did not like."[2] This clause reads also as if there were no religious or social obstacles to be overcome in being remarried, but as if it were a step that could quite easily be taken without raising any scandal. So also does a passage in the Jātakas.[3] An old squire who had a young wife, thinking of the days when he would be no more, is described as saying that as soon as he is dead, this girl, his wife, being so young will marry heaven knows whom, and spend all his money instead of handing it over to his son and heir. The dimness that otherwise shrouds this topic cannot be taken to mean that remarriage did not occur; and various reasons might be adduced to account for the sparseness of the data. In the first place, the texts were written down later than the events which they purport to record. In the interval much concerning the lives of women may have been forgotten. Men were the repositories of learning, of stories and legends, and the task of repeating the material to the monks for incorporation into the texts which they were editing would fall mainly, if not entirely, to men. They would tend to remember chiefly events and customs concerning themselves, and to let those concerning their women-folk fall into oblivion. But neither the laymen nor the monks could totally ignore the worth that some of the women

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[1] Theragāthā, xxix.

[2] Ang., iii., 57.

[3] Ang., iii., 57 ff. Rhys Davids, C.H.I., vol. i., p. 189, points out that Muṇḍa and his queen Bhaddā are post-canonical, having begun to reign about 40 A.B.

[4] Paṭācārā mourned for nearly all her dead relatives, not only for her husband.

[5] Therīgāthā, lxxii.

[1] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 82. *Cf.* above, p. 38.

[2] Majjhima, ii., 109.

[3] Jātaka, 39.

forced them to see in them. The survival of Vagirā's verse,[1] which discusses a topic of such fundamental importance as *satta* (a concrete living entity), as opposed to the notion of *anatta* (not-self)—reveals the fact that, even if the monks disliked it, they recognised that competence and talent were to be found among women; and therefore they could not fail to chronicle some records of them.

Secondly, the monks, in selecting their material, would tend to suppress as unimportant and uninteresting, and possibly also as unedifying, many of the details handed on to them concerning the rules and regulations governing a woman's life. Probably their historical sense was very weak, and they would not feel themselves called upon to introduce stories of the past into documents written down for the first time in days when the position of women—compated with its former approximation to equality with men—was suffering a noticeable decline.

Hence the mention of these four references to remarriage, but of no more than four, suggests that in all probability the texts are the outcome of monkish elimination. Yet, over and above this, the opening of the Order to women must have acted as a partial preventive to remarriage. Several women are recorded to have left the world when their husbands did;[2] but even the strongly religious temperament of the East could not have impelled all virtual widows into the Order; and it does not seem impossible that some should have found relief from their loneliness and burden of responsibilities in remarriage.

On the occurrence and frequency of divorce much the same line of criticism should be brought to bear as on the occurrence and frequency of remarriage. There can be no doubt that divorce was permissible if either party were found guilty of adultery or unfaithfulness. These were the only grounds on which

[1] Therīgāthā Appendix, 10.

[2] *E.g.*, Therīgāthā, xii.

a woman was allowed to divorce her husband. He, on the other hand, might put away his wife if she were barren,[1] and apparently if he found her uncongenial, as is shown by Isidāsī's case.[2] But since this is the only record of a divorce which was actually accomplished and not simply contemplated, the question of how often the measure was taken is unanswerable, and one on which the records of remarriage throw no light. Had these been more plentiful, some might also have constituted records of divorce.

There is nothing in the decrees attributed to Gotama at all comparable to Manu's—namely, that a wife may be divorced at once if she is disobedient or quarrelsome.[3] Since women in Buddhist lands have never been regarded as beasts of burden, they did not run the risk of being put away because they were bad workers. Further, nothing is said of the supersession of sick wives.[4] As marriage received no legal or religious sanction, so divorce was settled entirely by the parties concerned.

The compendium of Buddhist morality consists of five main precepts (*sīla*): abstinence from destruction of life, abstinence from taking what is not given, abstinence from unchastity, abstinence from speaking falsely, abstinence from the occasion or place of (*thāna*) drinking intoxicating liquors. It is the third of these, adultery, which concerns us here. According to Tachibana[5] there is not enough material to construct any concrete idea of its position in the Buddhist code of ethics, or of its prevalence during the Buddhist age. From the evidence that there is, it seems to me undeniable that Gotama had very definite views on chastity, and that he laid much stress on the virtue of continence.

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[1] See above, p. 37.

[2] Therīgāthā, lxxii.

[3] Manu, ix., 81: "The quarrelsome wife may be superseded without delay."

[4] Manu, ix., 81: "A sick wife . . . may be superseded (only) with her own consent."

[5] Tachibana, *The Ethics of Buddhism*, p. 61.

In the Buddhist Dhamma, the ideal of self-taming, to be attained by effort, energy and endeavour, is made vitally important.

> " If one man conquer in battle a thousand times thousand men, and if another conquers himself, he is the greatest of the conquerors.
>
> " One's own self (*attā*) conquered is better than all other people; not even a deva, a Gandharva, not Māra with Brahman could change into defeat the victory of a man who has conquered himself, and always lives under restraint."[1]

This is the keystone of the arch of Buddhist ethics. The ideal is that a man should so tame his own mind that, with reference to chastity, he should have the mother-mind the sister-mind and the daughter-mind[2] towards all women who were not his wife, regarding them as his mothers, sisters or daughters (according to their age). Adultery is spoken of as one of the four vices of conduct which bring a man to ruin;[3] either because a man, innocent, but in suspicious circumstances, may have the sins of the adulterer fathered upon him, as the Commentary points out; or because he actually " goes to women dear as life to other men."[4] In a saying attributed to Gotama, it is fitted into its place among the other heinous crimes, the avoidance of which constitutes Buddhist morality in its most fundamental and far-reaching aspects:

> " Slaughter of life, theft, lying, adultery—
> To these no word of praise the wise award."[5]

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[1] Dhammapada, verses 103-105.

[2] Saṃy. Nik., XXXV., iii., 3, § 127 (4).

[3] Dialogues, iii., 184.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*, 182, repeated Ang., ii., 71.

Such strong opinions as these, expressed in the Vinaya of the Houseman, must be given their due worth in estimating Gotama's views of chastity, and must not be neglected as if they expressed a mere passing fancy. They were the basis on which Buddhist morality was raised, and are constantly stressed everywhere in the Suttas[1] and not only in the Sigālôvādasutta. This is the only Sutta exclusively concerned with the relations of the householder to those about him, and hence all that has been preserved in it no doubt approximates closely to the real view of Gotama. Two other Suttas deal partially with the duties of the layman, and, in the Dhammikasutta, Gotama speaks openly to Dhammika, one of his followers at the Jetavana, about the householder's life. His censure is severe and plain:

> "Let the wise man avoid an unchaste life as a burning heap of coals; not being able to live a life of chastity, let him not transgress with another man's wife."[2]

A little later the five sīlas are repeated; and although they were all framed in the negative, they were none the less binding; and "Let us abstain from adultery"[3] might equally well have run "Let us be faithful." It was said that "Purity in works is to abstain from adultery,"[4] while the highest blessing was "Penance and chastity, discernment of the Noble Truths and the realisation of Nirvāna."[5] But "intercourse with another's wife, this is *āmagandha* (what defiles one),"[6] and brings the offender, after the body's dissolution, to a state of woe and misery or to purgatory; but he who refrains will pass to a happy state or to heaven.[7]

These statements, with their juxtaposition of adherence to the Dhamma and to chastity, enshrine no lukewarm disapproval, but a whole-hearted conviction of the difference between right and wrong. It is said that because of pleasure—always inexcusable to the monkish mind—men become burglars, robbers, brigands, highwaymen and adulterers.[1]

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[1] As *e.g.*, Majjhima, i., 286; Dialogues, iii., 70, *passim*.

[2] Sutta-Nipāta, 395; S.B.E., x.

[3] Dialogues, iii., p. 74.

[4] Ang., i., 271 ff.

[5] Sutta-Nipāta, 267.

[6] *Ibid.*, 242; lit. smells of the raw.

[7] Majjhima, i., 313 ff.

The enormity of the offence is insisted upon again and again in the Anguttara. As an outcome of ignorance (one of the "bonds"[2]) it is ranked with murder, theft and lying, leading to sorrow and pain. It denotes a falling away from morality,[3] and is a deed done by a bad man,[4] for which he, and similarly one who instigates another to perpetrate such conduct, may go to hell.[5] An instigator is, if anything, looked upon as even worse than one who actually does the deed on his own initiative.[6]

The abhorrence in which the offence was held by Gotama, and its vileness in his sight, was further recorded in two examples of his clairvoyance,[7] of which he made use to instruct the people.

> "I saw a man sunk up to his head in a dung-pit. . . .
> That being, brethren, was an adulterer in this very Rājagaha."

> ". . . . I saw a woman going through the air. Vultures and crows and falcons were flying after her, tearing her, pulling her to pieces, while she uttered cries of distress.
> That woman was an adulteress in this very Rājagaha."

According to Nāgasena,[8] the rulers, Kshatriyas of old established this decree: "Whosoever commits adultery . . . shall be liable to be fined or beaten or mutilated or broken[9] or executed," equally with the thief, the liar, the dacoit, the highwayman, the cheat and the swindler.

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[1] Majjhima, i., 87.
[2] Ang., i., 193 ff.
[3] Ang., i., 268.
[4] Ang., ii., 217.
[5] Ang., ii., 253.
[6] Ang., ii., 217.
[7] Samy. Nik., xix., 2, 11 (1); xix., 2, 13 (3).
[8] Milindapañha, iv., 8, 28.
[9] *Bhettabbo*, have the arms and legs broken.

Substantiation of these punishments is revealed by a Jātaka,[1] where it is said that, on account of such conduct, a certain queen deserved death, imprisonment, mutilation or cleaving asunder. She escaped these fearful fates, but was deposed from her position as queen-consort. Thus apparently a man might avenge himself upon his wife by putting her to death, if he discovered that she had committed adultery. There is an account of a certain woman, an adulteress, the wife of a member of the Licchavi clan, who thus laid herself open to death at her husband's hands.[2] He declared that he would do her an ill and would kill her. But before doing so he called together a special meeting of the Licchavis to sanction this act, so that they should not judge him afterwards. They are recorded to have said to him " Take your right." The punishment was therefore proposed by the husband and supported by the State. The story affords strong evidence against the presumption that Buddhist influence mitigated severity against the woman.[3]

It was severe against the man too:

> " Four things does a reckless man gain who covets his neighbour's wife, demerit, an uncomfortable bed, thirdly punishment, and lastly hell.
>
> " There is demerit, and the evil way (to hell), there is the short pleasure of the frightened in the arms of the frightened, and the king imposes heavy punishment; therefore let no man think of his neighbour's wife."[4]

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[1] Jātaka, 536.

[2] V., iv., pp. 225, 226.

[3] Art. " Adultery (Buddhist)," E.R.E., vol. i. *Cf.* Macdonell and Keith, *loc. cit.*, vol. i., pp. 396; 479. " Adultery was usually regarded among Aryan peoples as a serious offence against the husband of the woman affected," p. 396. No Vedic text gives us the rule well known to other Indo-Germanic peoples, that the adulterer taken in the act may be killed with impunity, though the later legal literature has traces of this rule, p. 480.

[4] Dhp., 309, 310.

Gotama is said to have uttered these words in connection with Khema, the handsome man whom women loved, and who "was given to running after other men's wives."[1] In passing it might be noted that this phrase was uttered by Gotama in telling Bhaddiya of four of the consequences that will beset a man overcome by greed (*lobha*) and delusion (*moha*).[2] Khema was arrested and brought for trial and judgment before the King, for adultery could be an offence against the State as well as against the moral law. If other offenders did not get off as lightly as he did—for he was not punished—what were the punishments generally meted out by the King? Possibly they were similar to those with which the queen in the Jātaka story was threatened.

There is too the pattern of the more ancient past to guide us. Amongst the Hindus the punishments varied from being torn in pieces in a public place by a dog, down to milder forms, such as eating the minimum amount of food to keep body and soul together, and being fined according to the difference of caste to which the two offenders in any given case belonged. Buddhism, being antipathetic to the caste system, could not use this graded form of punishment. But that the offence was considered to be a punishable one, although the penalty was not always inflicted, there is no doubt.

In the Dhammapada Commentary[3] there is an account of a man who committed fornication with his female servant; the editor, in glaring and astonishing opposition to the whole of the teaching on this subject, is apparently indifferent to the moral qualities of the act. The man received no punishment but solely an admonition; the result of which was that both he and his wife, who in her jealousy had mutilated the servant woman by cutting off her nose and ears,[4] gained the same reward, namely Conversion. Had the man confessed his sin, his pardon would have been comprehensible—on the assumption that confession wipes out the offence. But since it was the slave-woman who revealed these crimes, she was the cause of their Conversion—a fact which permits of no other explanation than that the most heinous of sins, if acknowledged, may be expiated. Nevertheless, Gotama's treatment of these two cases was more curative than punishment, since it implies that subjective recognition of an offence is an essential element for spiritual regeneration: conscience,[1] once aroused, can save a man, but external control can only deter him. Nor can this case be interpreted to mean that fornication was less of a sin than adultery, for there is a statement of no mild order attributed to Gotama, declaring that bodily unrighteousness consists in killing, stealing and fornication. In fact it occurs twice, once in the Majjhima,[2] where Gotama is represented as being in conversation with some brahmins, and once in the Anguttara[3] where he is depicted as speaking to Cunda, the son of a smith. On both occasions Gotama is made to say that a man transgresses in lusts (*kāmesu micchācārī*), having intercourse with girls under the charge of mother, father, brother, sister or relations, or with one wearing the very garlands of betrothal,[1] no less than with one who has taken refuge in the Dhamma, or with one under the protection of a husband, a married woman.[2] Gotama goes on to say that not only will a good and righteous man after death be reborn into one of the happy states, but if he so desires he can here and now, by extirpating the Cankers (*āsava*),[3] enter on and abide in Deliverance of heart and mind where no Cankers are.[4]

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[1] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 309-310.

[2] Ang., ii., 191.

[3] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 314.

[4] A practice still in force at the present day among the Hindus.

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[1] There is no exact equivalent in Pali for conscience, consciousness of not being your best. The phrase that comes nearest to it is *satindriya*, mindfulness. *Cf.* C. A. F. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist Psychological Ethics*, London, 1900, p. 16, note 3 : " *Sati* entering into and plunging down into the object of thought," thenceforth possibly to guide thought as a kind of moral mentor, see *ibid*., note 1. See also *ibid*., p. 20, note 1. *Hiri*, sense of shame. *Hiribala*, power of conscientiousness. *Hiri* often combined with and contrasted to *ottappa*, shrinking back from doing wrong, based on dread—*e.g.*, *hirottappa*, Majjhima, i., 271, trans. Lord Chalmers, *Further Dialogues of the Buddha*, " conscientious and scrupulous." The difference between the inwardness and outwardness of the feelings of shame and dread is well brought out at Majjhima, i., 356, trans. Lord Chalmers : *hirimā hoti hirīyati* . . . *ottāpi hoti ottappati* ; " shamefaced is he, inwardly ashamed . . . sensitive is he to reproach from without—dreading reproach."

[2] Majjhima, i., 286.

[3] Ang., v., 263.

There are no documents from which to ascertain the extent of adultery under Buddhism, or what it did to decrease an abuse which appears to have been fairly prevalent and much deprecated. For that is the conclusion which we must draw if we rely for our necessarily rough judgment on the number of passages in the literature referring to it. These perhaps form a not altogether untrustworthy guide, for it is " out of the accidents of a conversation, as from the confused currents of life and action (that) the typical form of virtues and vices emerge in definite outline,"[5] and, we may add, their occurrence in more or less definable proportions.

As Buddhism became more and more drenched in monkdom, so *virtue* became more and more extolled; the fact was chronicled that even if a woman were possessed of the powers of beauty, wealth, kin and children, but not of virtue, her relations would not let her stay in the family, but would cause her overthrow; and, according to the Commentary saying, " she has transgressed beyond all bounds," they would take her by the neck and throw her out.[6] Virtue, *brahmacariya*, in the eyes of the monks lost its original meaning of the good life itself, and came to bear the restricted meaning of chastity. Hence for them a virtuous wife was identical with a chaste wife. But until they imposed their interpretation on the popular point of view, a virtuous wife was considered to be one who led the good life, narrowed though this might be to one who followed it in strict compliance with the dictates of the husband.

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[1] Meaning also a courtesan.

[2] *Cf.* V., iii., 139 for this list, and see below, p. 73.

[3] Cankers, Drugs or Intoxicants. On difficulty of translating this term see *Compendium*, p. 227.

[4] Majjhima, i., 289.

[5] Pater, *Plato and Platonism*, library edition, 1917, p. 162.

[6] Saṃy. Nik., XXXVII., iii., § 30.

CHAPTER IV

THE WIDOW[1]

THE extreme paucity of references to widows in Buddhist literature hampers any attempt to give an account of the state of widowhood during the first centuries. There is far less material here than there is for any of the other states of womanhood. Yet, a fairly complete general picture of the Buddhist widow may be drawn from the material that there is, if it be judged by what is known of the social outlook during the days of primitive Buddhism; and from what there is not, if the silence here be compared with the records that survive from sects prior to Buddhism and contemporaneous with it.

Viewed in the light of what evidence there is, widow-burning, so far as can be ascertained, was not practised; and what was of perhaps more importance still to the widow, her state was not accompanied by any of the hardships which sometimes characterised it among various of the other Aryan peoples.[2] She suffered no moral degradation as a consequence of her husband's decease. Her life of course was changed, but there was no ensuing alteration in her social status. It had not to be advertised by any such signs as shaving the head,[3] and the relinquishment of the wearing of jewelry and coloured apparel. Her behaviour had not to proclaim her state, reflecting it by any such austerities as habitual frugality in eating, fasting at specific times, and sleeping on mats on the floor. She did not have to absent herself from domestic ceremonies, for Buddhism was not swamped by that mass of ritual attending birth, naming, marriage and death, which in Hinduism demanded the absence of inauspicious omens, events and creatures, including the widow, for their true and full performance, or indeed for their performance at all. These negative liberties, compared with what she might have had to suffer had she belonged to another community, are sufficient to show that she was not degraded by her bereavement in the eyes of her society, as were the brahmin widows. She was still regarded as a rational human being with a right to maintain her recognised position in the social structure, and was branded by no stigma. Her involuntary entry into the class of widows did not convert her into an object thought to be " impure " or " untouchable," nor did she become a dreaded creature of ill-omen. Such notions were outside the rational trend of Buddhist thought.

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[1] *Vidhavā*, a widow; S., i., 170, corresponds to the Vedic *vidhavā* as "the desolate one.' See Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, ii., 299, from the root *vidhu*, lonely; *vidhura*, separated.

[2] *Cf.* C.H.I., vol. i., p. 292.

[3] *Cf.* Mahāpajāpatī, who did not cut off her hair because widowed, but because she sought entry into the Order. Therīgāthā Cmy. on lv. These are some of the signs of the widowhood among the Hindus.

Yet her state was doubtless incomplete—a notion brought out by the use of the word *anāthā*, meaning unprotected, destitute, sometimes used for widows. Even when widowed she might, however, be protected by her mother, by her father, by her parents, by her brother, by her sister, by her clan or by the Dhamma;[1] or, if she went into the Order, by an elder almswoman.

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[1] V., iii., p. 139. The two last of the ten kinds of women to be mentioned in the list are the *sārakkhā*—which the Cmy. explains as *mālāguḷa-parikkhittā*, one adorned with a string of garlands—*i.e.*, a marriageable woman or a courtesan—and the *saparidaṇḍā*, a certain class of woman the use of whom renders a person liable to punishment. *Cf.* Ang., v., 266, 267, where the woman protected by parents and by clan is omitted, and *sassāmikā*, a woman having a husband, is inserted. Here *mālāguḷaparikkhittā* is substituted for *sārakkhā*. *Cf.* Majjhima, i., 286 ; and see above, p. 70.

Hence this word apparently means to be without a husband, and is applicable equally to widows and to unmarried women. Congruent with this description is the plea of a woman whose husband had been taken prisoner, and who went weeping to the King's palace begging for something wherewith to be covered.[1] Rejecting the clothes offered her by royal command, she said that what she wanted was not clothes but a husband; and she declared to the King "a husband is a woman's real covering, and she that lacks a husband goes bare and naked indeed." The Commentary goes on to say that in order to enforce this truth the following Sutta should be recited:

> ". . . . Bare and naked is a woman seen
> Who, having brothers ten, yet lacks a mate."[2]

Bare and naked perhaps, but not despicable.

Nevertheless, the view is set forth in the last Jātaka that widowhood might be fraught with cruelty and hardships and dissatisfaction.[3] A certain woman who feared that she was to be virtually widowed declared that she too would put on the yellow robe and follow her husband through all the obstacles and dangers of the forest-life, rather than be harried by the meanest, eat of leavings, be knocked down and roughly handled by men while all stand round and stare; rather than have her sons struck, rather than hear ceaseless unkind speeches from brother and friend. If this were indeed the widow's normal fate, then no wonder she groaned and groaned again, "O terrible is widowhood." But this story cannot be taken as a criterion of the widow's position in the earlier days of Buddhism, because it was written down when women were again deposed from their temporarily improved standing. Then their life was not a living death, like that led by so many Hindu widows, but, on the contrary, certain new interests might be brought to it. If she did not remarry,[1] as seems to have been possible but not at all usual, the choice was open to her of entering the Order of Almswomen, or, if she did not feel too forlorn and unprotected to desire to take this step, then she might continue in a life which was not destitute of respect, and sometimes of position. For if she remained at home, there is evidence to show that a widow could certainly manage the property after her husband was dead and gone,[2] and also that she could almost certainly inherit her husband's riches.

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[1] Jātaka Cmy. on 67.

[2] *Cf*. Jātaka, 547, "a widow may have brothers ten, yet is a naked thing."

[3] Jātaka, 547.

Several passages in the Therīgāthā and the Commentary and other books show that the wealth was not necessarily left to the male relatives, but could pass into female hands to be held by them.[3] For with the inheriting of property naturally goes the holding of property and responsibility for its management; this would be the widow's duty if she were the inheritor. Although there are no cases in the Therīgāthā Commentary of an actual widow inheriting her husband's fortune, such a custom acquires the aspect of probability amounting almost to certainty; first, because it was unlikely that any opprobrium was attached to the state of widowhood; and, secondly, because there is on record the case of the proposed inheritance of riches by Dhammadinnā, a virtual widow.[4] When her husband renounced the world he offered her as much wealth as she required, and although she did not accept it, the fact that she could have done so had she been so minded, gives a clue to the inclusion of widows among the lawful inheritors.

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[1] *Cf.* Manu, ix., 65: "In the sacred texts which refer to marriage, the appointment (of widows) is nowhere mentioned, nor is the remarriage of widows prescribed in the rules concerning marriage."

[2] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 115; Jātaka, 439.

[3] Therīgāthā, lxx.; Therīgāthā Cmy. on xxxvii.; on lxix., see above, pp. 26, 54.

[4] Therīgāthā Cmy. on xii.

It is not clear whether the fortune that Soṇā[1] handed over to her sons after her husband had renounced the world was her own, of which she had been in possession for some time, or whether she had only recently acquired it as the result of her husband's secession. Either interpretation appears to be possible.[2]

Had it been widows only, or mainly, who sought the safe shelter of the religious life, it might have been supposed that their life was openly dogged by scorn and unkindness, a tide which it would have been useless for them to try to stem since they too would have shared in the belief that they deserved the misery and the treatment they received. But the Order was also open to the wealthy and the successful, who had at their command all the materials and aids for worldly happiness. There is ample evidence to show that it was freely sought by many in the full flush of prosperity; but no more evidence to show that women joined more readily in their widowhood because their neighbours and children abused them, than there is to show that in their wifehood their husbands ill-treated them, or that in their girlhood their parents neglected them and wilfully cramped their activities, thus projecting them into the Order. They did not join because of the exigencies of status, but because of individual conditions. From the survival of three records[3] of widows who joined the Order, it may be inferred that others, unrecorded and forgotten, did likewise. It provided them with a means of beginning a new kind of life in order to forget the joys that had held the germs of the sorrows which had matured in the old. To some women, entry into the Order must have been a welcome alternative to staying in the world and treading out a round where they would be constantly reminded of all that they were yearning for and missing. For one course appears to have been barred to them: to go completely out of the world by burning themselves at their husbands' cremation; and another, remarriage, was difficult in the extreme.

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[1] *Ibid.* on xlv.

[2] Apparently Hindu widows succeeded to husband's property on failure of male descendants. *E.R.E.* art. "Inheritance (Hindu)," vol. vii., p. 308.

[3] Therīgāthā, xvii., xlvii., lv.

Since the texts are almost silent on the question of widow-remarriage, it is to be concluded that, if it existed at all, it formed the great exception rather than the common rule. There are but two references to it. Neither relates to an actual case of a widow-remarriage, but to an hypothetical one, for in neither case was the woman in fact widowed. One story tells how Nakulamātā[1] sought to disabuse her sick husband's mind of any fears of her remarrying after he was dead. Although she did not speak of it with bated breath as though it were a shocking idea to contemplate, still it is incorporated in a list of other things she might conceivably do, all of which would be obviously disgraceful. These include neglect to feed the children and maintain the household; lack of desire to see the Blessed One and the Community of Almsmen; immorality; loss of inner peace and loss of steadfastness in the faith and the doctrine and discipline.

The other reference is unsatisfactory as evidence.[2] It is a late one, for it occurs in the Jātakas. It again relates to a line of conduct which a woman suggested she could take if she were widowed. Her husband, son and brother were all imprisoned, and the King out of mercy towards her said that he would free the one whom she chose. She replied, "If I live I can get another husband and another son; but as my parents are dead, I can never get another brother," and she asked that the life of her brother might be spared.

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[1] Ang., iii., 295 ff.

[2] Jātaka Cmy. on 67.

Does this scarcity of data show that widow-remarriage, if permissible—as the above stories indicate—was very seldom resorted to? A glimmer of light is thrown here by a passage in the Saṃyutta Nikāya, bearing the curious title "Of many Daughters" (*Bahudhīti*).[1] The gist of the Sutta is that the friar (*samaṇa*) is a happy man because he is not responsible for his seven daughters, all widows, with one child, or perhaps two, whom they would be likely to send cadging for food to him, their grandfather, if he were not a holy man. Although they evidently found it hard to make both ends meet, none of them seem to have contemplated the possibility of remarriage to alleviate her struggle for existence.

In the absence of further documentary evidence, we can only fall back on the suppositions put forward to account for the sparseness of the evidence for the remarriage of women who were not widows. In addition, a cause grounded in the times themselves may be found in the small proportion of child-marriages. The distressing state of girl-children, the partners of such bonds, often widows before having attained the age of puberty, was therefore not a condition likely to arise constantly, and burn itself upon Gotama's notice. The only existing records of what he is reported to have said forbid the ordination of girls, married or unmarried, who are twelve years old or less than twelve years old.[2] But even had child-widows formed a large part of the population, and even if it had been clear that they were allowed to remarry, without independent evidence it would not be safe to assume that adult widows were also able to remarry. Yet there is some evidence for this, although it is indirect. There was no proscription on remarriage in the Vedic texts; and in some cases the widow married her husband's younger brother.[3] We may therefore surmise that it continued through the Epic period into Buddhist days.[1]

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[1] Saṃy. Nik., vii., i, § 10.

[2] V., iv., pp. 321-323, 329-330.

[3] Keith, *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, i., 476 ff.

The development of the prohibition of widow-remarriage corroborates this view; for it began later among the most orthodox and the most high-caste brahmins, those to whom in fact, with Manu as their law-book, Buddhism was most antagonistic. It began tentatively, not definitely forbidding remarriage, but encouraging a widow, for the sake of her future happiness, to live a life of chastity and celibacy until her death.[2]

A course definitely barred to widows for ending their widowhood was that of burning on their husband's funeral-pyre (*sati*, from the verbal root meaning what is real, good, true, virtuous). From the complete silence of the Buddhist books on this subject, it may be concluded that if it existed at all, this " hideous custom " was extremely inconspicuous.[3] There is no evidence to show that it existed in Vedic days. Therefore it was not one of the practices which Gotama had to combat. Had it obtained, he would almost certainly have protested, and denunciations of this practice would have been included in his condemnation of other sacrifices. For a teaching which was opposed to offerings and sacrifices and to the taking of life, whether one's own or another's, whether on one's own initiative or on that of another, could not have failed to challenge this transgression of the moral law of abstaining from killing, or to have risen in revolt against this demand of a great human sacrifice. Where the texts decry sacrifices and other brahmanical practices this could not have been ignored. Hence silence can only imply the virtual absence of this custom.

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[1] Winternitz, *Die Frau in den Indischen Religionen*, vol. i., p. 93.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 94, 95.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 70-84. There is the evidence of Diodorus and Strabo for widow-burning having occurred in 316 B.C.

A great deal has been written on the widow's self-immolation, compulsory or voluntary, on her husband's funeral-pyre; and it may be as well shortly to recapitulate here some of the chief conclusions drawn. It seems quite clear that widow-burning is an ancient custom among various peoples; that it was widely distributed;[1] and that India was not unique in practising it, and only did so to a limited extent. As most primitive peoples have a surplus of females over males, pressure might be put upon widows to remove themselves in order to eliminate the superfluous women. This was followed later by the belief that they were unclean creatures, widowed as a result of a sin that had overtaken them in a previous existence. By the time that these primitive peoples had become civilised and settled, and were leading a sedentary life in India, the balance of the sexes adjusted itself. Hence the insistence on *sati* decreased, and until it was revived centuries later,[2] it almost completely died down.

Westermarck[3] suggests that, since most races believe in some form of survival, and since among many a wife is regarded as the exclusive property of her husband, she is not allowed to survive him here, for he may want her in the other world where he is gone. In addition to this, the blood-sacrifice of the wife, and the disposal of other near and important possessions in the funerary rites of the dead man are regarded by some primitive peoples as salutary for the deceased as well as for the living; for if the dead are contented and appeased they will not reappear in ghostly guise to frighten their surviving relatives. But as Tylor suggests, with masterly acumen based on internal evidence, the Vedas in this matter are a protest and a reform,[1] transforming reality into a symbol.[2] According to this theory widow-burning was not sanctioned by the Vedic religion, either in Saṃhitas, or in Brāhmaṇas, or in the ritual books; and widows did not immolate themselves on their husband's funeral-pyre, according to the custom which doubtless existed, although never as the general rule even in pre-Vedic times.[3] Instead of an actual burning, it was probably usual for them to go through a symbolical burning to signify that they too were putting the old life from them.

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[1] Westermarck, *History of Human Marriage*, 5th ed., vol. i., p. 317-320. *Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, vol. i., p. 474; Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. i., p. 467; *Cf.* Winternitz, *loc. cit.*, p. 56.

[2] Westermarck, *History of Human Marriage*, 5th ed., vol. i., p. 319.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 317.

Keith[4] gives the following description of the funeral rites which obtained during the Vedic age: "The dead was then laid on the funeral-pyre in the midst of three fires produced by manipulation from the sacred fires maintained by him, if he did so maintain them. Then the wife of the dead man is placed beside him, but taken away with the words (RV., x., 18, 8):

> "'Arise O woman to the world of the living, departed is the life of him with whom thou liest; to marriage here thou hast attained with him as husband who graspeth thy hand.'

"It is clear that the husband's brother, or some other—a pupil or aged servant, according to Āçvalāyana (iv., 2, 18)—must be meant who takes her in wedlock." Winternitz,[5] after giving the same quotation, goes on to say: "Wahrscheinlich fand diese Zeremonie ursprünglich statt, wenn die Frau ihren ersten Gatten keinen Sohn geboren hatte, und sogleich dem Schwager die Hand zu einem neuen Bunde reichen musste. Die Ritualtexte überliefern den Brauch, ohne die Schwagerehe zu erwähnen, bloss als eine symbolische Handlung, die ein tatsächliches Mitsterben der Witwe ausschliesst."

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[1] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. i., p. 467.

[2] *Cf.* Winternitz, *loc. cit.*, p. 57. "Aber indem er (der Priester) hinzufugte: 'Verliehe ihr Nachkommenschaft und Richtum *hier* auf Erden' deutete er zugleich an dass sie *nur zum Schein*, nur in Form einer symbolischen Handlung, dem Gatten in Jenseits zu folgen sich bereit erklarte."

[3] Winternitz (in a letter).

[4] Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upanishads*, pp. 418, 419.

[5] Winternitz, *loc. cit.*, p. 57.

This symbolical action should be regarded, then, as a survival of an ancient custom which was probably social and religious in its origins,[1] and in which the devotion of the woman to the man was among the root ideas.[2] It might be taken as an example of Durkheim's theory that the religious practices of a people depend upon their social constitution. Among the Buddhists, in consequence of the greater independence of the women, there was not so much as this symbolical burning, which would indeed have been incompatible with their negative attitude towards rites.

In view of the available evidence it may be concluded that the position of women in Buddhist India was more enviable and more honourable than it had been in pre-Buddhist days. Daughters and widows were no longer regarded with such undisguised despair and contumely. On the contrary, both they and wives commanded more respect and ranked as individuals. They enjoyed more independence, and a wider liberty to guide and follow their own lives.

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[1] Schrader, *Indo-Germanic Custom, in Prehistoric Antiquities of the Aryan Peoples*, English trans., London, 1890, p. 391.

[2] Coomaraswamy, Sati, *Sociological Review*, 1912.

CHAPTER V

THE WOMAN WORKER

AMONG the better classes in Buddhist Indian society, the great majority of women were supported by children, husband, or father. They did not do much, if any, work beyond their household tasks as mother, wife, or daughter. But among the poorer people the case was different, and there are various records which refer to self-supporting women who were engaged in a trade or a profession.

It is said, for example, that a certain woman was the keeper of a paddy-field; and she gathered and parched the heads of rice, doing the work herself.[1] Another is described as watching the cotton-fields,[2] where she used sometimes to spin fine thread from the clean cotton[3] in order to while away the time.

Women also appear to have been capable of functioning as keepers of the burning-grounds. Two references are made to the same woman, Kāḷī, who was engaged in this occupation,[4] although no mention is made of any wage she might have received. She evidently had at heart the welfare of those who came to meditate in the charnel-field, for she provided them with objects suitable for the contemplation of Impermanence.

A spirited description of a woman acrobat occurs in the Dhammapada Commentary.[5] Although it is the only reference to a woman who earned her livelihood by such arts, it is illuminating. For it is probable that some of the five hundred tumblers with whom she was, were also women. They used annually or twice a year to "visit Rājagaha, and give performances for seven days before the King. . . . One day a certain female tumbler climbed a pole, turned somersaults thereon, and balancing herself on the tip of the pole, danced and sang as she trod the air." A son of a great merchant fell in love with her, but her father would not give his daughter for money, and suggested that the youth should travel about with them. The people delighted in these acrobatic performances, and "stood on beds piled on beds" in order to obtain a good view. They tossed up gifts to the tumblers, who also earned "much gold and money."

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[1] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 118. [2] Jātaka, 546. [3] *Ibid.*

[4] Theragāthā Cmy. on cxxxvi.; Dhp. Cmy. on verses 7-8. This Kāḷī is not to be confused with the slave-woman of the same name mentioned below.

[5] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 348.

Such were, perhaps, the more unusual ways in which women supported themselves. Far more numerous were domestic female slaves, born to this status of other domestic slaves, like Puṇṇā, in the household of Anāthapiṇḍika.[1] They formed part of the property of most wealthy householders. "Wives and children, bondwomen and bondmen, goats and sheep, fowl and swine, elephants, cattle, horses and mares, together with gold and coins of silver":[2] all these ties the houseman is said to pursue with blind and avid appetite. But knowing that they are fetters and encumbrances, even the unconverted man, when speaking in praise of Gotama, might say: "He refrains from accepting slave-women or slave-men."[3] All these are thought to be subject to the round of rebirth, to decay and impurity, and also, with the exceptions of the inanimate gold and coins of silver, to disease, death and sorrow.

There is only one reference in canonical literature to a slave-woman who was maltreated.[4] She had tried her mistress's patience past bearing. Her name was Kāḷī, and she had endeavoured to find out whether the reputation her mistress, Videhikā, had for gentleness and mildness was true. She therefore got up later and later three mornings running. At first her mistress merely questioned her and frowned; the next morning she complained; and the third morning she struck Kāḷī on the head with a lynch-pin, and drew blood.

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[1] Therīgāthā Cmy. on lxv.

[2] Majjhima, i., 162.

[3] Dialogues, i., p. 5.

[4] Majjhima, i., 125-126.

It nowhere appears that slave-women were overworked. There were multitudes of them in the royal establishments, some of whom waited upon the queens, and performed such duties as daily buying flowers for them,[1] and looking after the jewels of the ladies in the royal harem.[2] In other households they pounded rice,[3] an arduous task, and helped with the cooking.

Three slave-women called Puṇṇā are mentioned: the one referred to above; one of whom it is said that the brahmin Pokkharasāti's heart and mind does not read the heart and mind of his domestic slave, Puṇṇikā,[4] meaning that not even a brahmin has omniscient powers; and another who is mentioned in the Milindapañha as one of the seven people who did "acts of devotion which bare fruit even in this life."[5] But she is the only one to be omitted from the more detailed descriptions given later[6] of the merit-working acts done by these people. Doubtless she attained some blissful state, but was she freed from bondage in this life?

Slave-women could be emancipated, but only with the consent of their master. It is significant that in all recorded cases where such a step was taken, it was in order to enable the freed-woman to enter the Order,[7] for slaves were ineligible for ordination.[8]

Khujjuttarā,[9] a slave-woman of Queen Sāmāvatī, did not apparently become emancipated on her conversion to Buddhism. She reformed her conduct in so far as after the first time that she had heard Gotama preach she spent the whole of the eight pieces of money that the queen had given her for buying flowers, instead of spending only four and keeping the other four for herself. Being asked by the queen why she had brought back so many flowers on this particular day, she said that she had heard the discourse given by the Exalted One, and had acquired understanding of the Dhamma. She then preached it to the queen, who became a believer, and to all her women-attendants. They begged Khujjuttarā to be to them as a mother and a teacher, and to go to hear every discourse given by the Teacher, and then return and teach it to them. In this way she came to know the Tipiṭika by heart, and it is said that the Master assigned her pre-eminence among his female lay disciples, who were learned in the Scriptures and able to expound the Dhamma.

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[1] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 21-23.

[2] Jātaka, 92.

[3] *Ibid.*, 45.

[4] Majjhima, ii., 201.

[5] Milindapañha, iv., 1, 37.

[6] *Ibid.*, iv., 8, 25.

[7] Therīgāthā Cmy. on lxv.; Dhp. Cmy. on 314.

[8] See below, p. 146.

[9] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 21-23.

Besides slave-women some of the more prosperous householders had also in their retinues vast troupes of female musicians. Gotama himself, before he entered on the homeless way, is said to have been "ministered to by bands of women musicians,"[1] and it is recorded of Yasa the noble youth that "in the palace for the rainy season, he lived during the four months (of that season), surrounded with female musicians, among whom no man was."[2] The instruments played by such women included the flute, lute, tabor and drum.[3] In a passage in the Milindapañha the drum (*bheri*) is described as making a sound "by the action or effort of a woman or a man."[4] Seven kinds of musical instruments are alluded to in the Dialogues,[5] but they are not specified. Cymbals[6] were in vogue.

An almost necessary concomitant of music was dancing. Although the true ascetic should abstain from being a spectator at shows or fairs with nautchdances (*nacca*), singing (*gīta*), and inſtrumental music (*vādita*),[1] this prohibition did not apply to the laity. Sound prompted sight to aid in dispelling the tedium of the days of torrential rains, and dancing-girls abetted in this work, performing as was their wont upon large woollen carpets,[2] sometimes singing themselves[3] and making music also.[4]

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[1] Majjhima, i., 504.

[2] MV., i., 7, 1, 2; *cf.* Dialogues, ii., 170.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Milindapañha, iv., 6, 58.

[5] Dialogues, ii., 183.

[6] *Samma* and *tāḷa*, perhaps a gong, Dialogues, ii., 170.

In order to show the higheſt honour to King Mahājanaka, his subjects prepared a great feſtival, and when they were presenting their offerings " a crowd of King's miniſters sat on one side, on another a hoſt of brahmins, on another the wealthy merchants and the like, and on another the moſt beautiful dancing-girls."[5]

But they were not employed solely for entertainment: they were sometimes put to other uses. Queen Sīlavatī, the consort of Okkāka, had no child.[6] The people complained that the realm would perish, and counselled the king to send out a band of dancing-women of low degree into the ſtreets. If no one of these, however, gave birth to a child he should then send a company of women of good ſtanding, and finally a band of the higheſt rank. The expeditions were to receive religious sanction, but this was not so much to regularise the ſtatus of the nautch-girl, for she was already accepted as a necessity to the wealthy, as to insure a successful result. But when the king and the people knew that they were doomed to disappointment, the failure of the women to give birth to a child was attributed to their lack of merit and to their immorality: a Hindu rather than a Buddhiſt interpretation.

Thus women professional workers consiſted largely of domeſtic-slaves, nautch-girls and women musicians. In addition to these, a large part of the female population who did not otherwise gain their livelihood, or who were not otherwise supported, were courtesans. They also were sometimes well versed in dancing, singing and lute-playing.[1] Although the extent of prostitution in ancient India is disputed, it had existed before the Buddhist days,[2] despite the importance given to marriage in the Vedic Age: but for some girls who were without protectors,[3] a life of prostitution was an obvious course to pursue. Their conduct was regretted by some members of the population. " Aśvapati, the prince, boasts that his kingdom has no thief, churl or drunkard, none who neglect the sacrifice or the sacred lore, no adulterer or courtesan."[4] In the Laws of Manu courtesans are portrayed as ceremonially unclean, and brahmins are enjoined never to eat food which has been offered by harlots,[5] for it is said to exclude from the (higher) worlds.[6] Further a king should know clever harlots to be a thorn in the side of his people,[7] should instigate them to commit offences, then bring them into his power[8] and punish them.[9]

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[1] Dialogues, i., 5, 7.
[2] MV., v., 10, 3.
[3] Jātaka, 529.
[4] *Ibid.*, 132, 313.
[5] *Ibid.*, 539.
[6] *Ibid.*, 531.

In spite of adverse public opinion and in spite of punishments, courtesans persisted into the Buddhist days, when they formed a far from negligible portion of the community, as is shown by the very ease with which they are used in similes.[10] Some, like Vimalā[11] and Sirimā,[12] appear to have been prostitutes because their mothers were. Yet among this class of women the birth-rate must have been somewhat low. Hence comparatively few girl-children would be born to enjoy their mother's favour,[13] for courtesans were fully aware, as Sālavatī phrased it, that " men do not like a pregnant woman. If anyone should find out regarding me that the courtesan Sālavatī is pregnant, my whole position would be lost."[1] There is no record that female infanticide was ever committed by a courtesan; but if sons were born to them they ran a certain risk of being murdered.[2] Sālavatī and the courtesan of Kosambi[3] and the courtesan of Rājagaha[4] all gave orders that their sons should be put into an old winnowing basket and cast away on the dust-heap. Sālavatī's was saved by the prince, Abhaya, and lived to become a famous physician. On the other hand, both Ambapālī and Abhaya's mother each had an almsman son.

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[1] MV., viii., 1, 3.

[2] C.H.I., vol. i., p. 97; Macdonell and Keith, *loc. cit.*, vol. i., p. 395; *cf.* vol. i., pp. 30, 147, 481; vol. ii., p. 496.

[3] C.H.I., vol. i., pp. 88-89.

[4] Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upanishads*, p. 585.

[5] Manu, iv., 209. [6] *Ibid.*, 219. [7] *Ibid.*, ix., 259, 260.

[8] *Ibid.*, ix., 261. [9] *Ibid.*, ix., 262.

[10] Theragāthā, verse 939, *gaṇikā va vibhūsāyaṃ*, " like courtesans do they parade their gear."

[11] Therīgāthā, xxxix. [12] Sutta Nipāta, Cmy., i., 144.

[13] See above, p. 20.

Four courtesans, Vimalā, Abhaya's mother, called Padumavatī, Aḍḍhakāsī and Ambapālī, having been converted to Buddhism, entered the Order and attained to arahanship. To each of these, too, verses are attributed in the Therīgāthā. Of Vimalā[5] little other mention is made,[6] and none of Abhaya's mother:[7] she was the town-belle of Ujjenī, and her boy, Abhaya, was King Bimbisāra's son. On the other hand, Aḍḍhakāsī[8] is important, as in order to circumvent the difficulties of her ordination a relaxation in the discipline was granted.[9] And Ambapālī[10] became and remained famous as one of the most loyal and generous supporters of the Order.

This beautiful woman is said to have come into being spontaneously in the king's gardens at Vesālī at the foot of a mango-tree; but really she was half-sister to

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[1] MV., viii., 1, 2-4.

[2] The putting away of an illegitimate child is referred to in the Rig-Veda. Macdonell and Keith, *loc. cit.*, vol. i., p. 395.

[3] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 21-23.

[4] MV., viii., 1, 4.

[5] Therīgāthā, xxxix., *cf.* below, p. 184.

[6] She occurs again Theragāthā, verses 1150-1157, again being rebuked by Mahā-Moggallāna.

[7] Therīgāthā Cmy. on xxvi., see below, p. 185.

[8] *Ibid.*, on xxii., see below, pp. 143, 184.

[9] See below, p. 143.

[10] Therīgāthā Cmy. on lxvi., see below, p. 185.

Vāsitthī,[1] their mother coming of a clansman's family at Vesālī.[2] By her beauty, talents and desirability Ambapālī made this town ever more and more flourishing.[3] But as she grew older she seems to have come under the influence of her son, the Elder Vimala-Kondañña, and "later on, out of faith in the Master, she built a vihāra in her own gardens,"[4] for she had become exceedingly rich. One day, having heard that Gotama was at Koṭigāma, she ordered a number of magnificent vehicles to be made ready, and drove up to the place where he was preaching, finishing the journey on foot, owing to the impassability of the roads.[5] After he had taught and gladdened her with a religious discourse, she asked him and the fraternity of almsmen to take their meal at her house on the next day. He accepted, and although shortly afterwards he received an invitation for the same day from the princely family of the Licchavis, he refused them and kept his promise to Ambapālī; not so much because she was rich, for the Licchavis were rich also, but for the sake of keeping troth; or because, although there is no trace in the records that she was repenting or that he was blaming her, he may have felt that she was needing his advice at a crisis in her life more than they. Her disdain of the Licchavi men, her clients, as they drove up in their gorgeous chariots, also pointed to the change of heart which she was experiencing.

Soon after, when Gotama was at Ñālika, she offered her mango-grove "to the fraternity of almsmen with the Buddha at its head." He welcomed this donation graciously. It would be of great use to the Order and he could not have wished to rebuff one on the path of regeneration. She finally attained arahanship.[6]

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[1] Therīgāthā Cmy. on li.

[2] Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Gotama the Man*, London, 1928, p. 149.

[3] MV., viii., 1, 1.

[4] Therīgāthā Cmy. on lxvi.

[5] MV., vi., 30; Mhp., ii., § 17.

[6] Therīgāthā Cmy. on lxvi.

Besides Ambapālī, other courtesans appear to have benefited the Order in various ways. It is said that at the assemblies of Sulasā the courtesan and of Sirimā the courtesan, eighty-four thousand people penetrated to a knowledge of the Dhamma.[1] Nothing is said to show why Sirimā was endowed with virtue. She appears to have been a malicious woman, who was asked by Uttarā, a female lay-disciple to act as concubine to her husband for a fortnight while she herself went away to hear the preaching. Sirimā became angry with Uttarā, and injured her. But Uttarā made her ask pardon from Gotama, and she confessed the evil she had done to Uttarā.[2] Sulasā's story appears in a Jātaka.[3] She lived in Benares and had heaps of courtesans in her train. One day, as she was watching from her window, she saw a robber who had been captured, and who was being led to the place of execution by royal command. She fell in love with him, and thought that if she could free him she would give up her bad life and live respectably with him. She managed to gain his freedom by sending a thousand pieces to the chief constable and then lived with him in delight and harmony. Later he wanted to rob her, but she threw him over a precipice.[4]

Further, a group of courtesans saved the life of a lay-disciple,[5] who was returning from listening to a discourse on the Dhamma. But for their intervention he would have been killed in mistake for the real thieves who had fled. Yet, having saved him, they neither mocked at him nor tried to seduce him.

A courtesan who seems to have come under the spell of the Dhamma was Bindumatī.[6] In the time of Asoka, it is said that by an Act of Truth, that is by calling " to mind the attributes of the Buddhas who had passed away and (making) a solemn asseveration of the truth," she reversed the flow of the Ganges.

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[1] Milindapañha, vi., 4.
[2] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 223.
[3] Jātaka, 419.
[4] *Cf.* the story of Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā, Therīgāthā Cmy. on xlvi.
[5] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 165.
[6] Milindapañha, iv., 1, 47.

Yet in spite of the virtue of all these courtesans, and of others less prominent, like the one who kept the five sīlas (which would preclude her from plying her trade);[1] and like the one who for three years kept her honour,[2] these were perhaps exceptional cases, and therefore incapable of raising the profession in the eyes of the world or of the almspeople. And not without reason was it regarded as unpraiseworthy and inestimable by the world, and as contaminating by the almspeople, however much it might be thought at the same time to be due to the working of karma. Some courtesans tried to tempt the almswomen back from the holy life,[3] hence the ruling that they were not to be associated with; some tried to break in upon the meditations of the almsmen,[4] and even if they did not try their presence was a menace to mental calm:[5] while others were the cause of strife among men,[6] obstacles in the path of freedom from lust, and hence obstacles in the path to tranquillity.

> "From lust springs grief; from lust springs fear:
> He that is free from lust neither sorrows nor fears."[7]

One courtesan of Benares, called Sāmā,[8] appears to have had a short respite from her profession, during which time she took her pleasure only with a robber, although she was a favourite of the king's, and was beloved by a rich young merchant. The beginning of her story resembles Sulasā's, but Sāmā's robber, instead of being worsted by her, squeezed her until she became unconscious, and then made off with her ornaments. When she had recovered she asked what had happened to her young lord. Her attendants said that they did not know, and she concluded he thought that she must be dead She therefore summoned musicians and actors, and told them to go out into every village, town and city, and play a certain tune, which if her husband heard he would recognise. At last they arrived at a border-village, and the robber came forward and the actors explained their presence; but he said that even if it were true that Sāmā were alive, which he did not believe, he no longer wanted her, alive or dead. When the actors reported this to Sāmā, she with regrets once more took to her old course of life. How else should she have earned her livelihood ?

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[1] Jātaka, 276.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] See below, p. 231.
[4] Theragāthā Cmy. on lviii.; Dhp. Cmy. on verses 99, 217.
[5] Jātaka, 432.
[6] Therīgāthā Cmy. on lxvi.; Udāna, Jaccundha, 8, tr. Strong, p. 96; Dhp. Cmy. on verse 214.
[7] Dhp., 214.
[8] Jātaka, 318.

Courtesans sometimes lived in groups,[1] or went about in groups, and the more famous ones sometimes had others in their train, as it is said of Sulasā[2] and of Kālī,[3] a courtesan of Benares, who attempted to restrain her brother who was a debauchee, a drunkard and a gambler, and spent all the money she gave him. They were often extremely wealthy. Some, as for example Ambapālī, Sirimā, Sulasā, Sāmā and Kālī, put their fee at a thousand pieces (*kahāpaṇas*) each night. Sālavatī asked for a hundred pieces for one night.[4] Mention is sometimes made of their ornaments[5] and their serving-maids.[6] An interesting description of Kālī's brothel is given:[7] "Now in that house of ill-fame the fashion was this: out of every thousand pieces of money received, five hundred were for the woman, five hundred were the price of the clothes, perfumes and garlands; the men who visited that house received garments to clothe themselves in, and stayed the night there; then on the next day they put off the garments they had received, and put on those they had brought and went their ways."

Despite the disturbing effect they might have on the almspeople, courtesans are never openly condemned in the literature, being regarded as more piteous and low than blameworthy. Hence, although they come towards the end of a long list of trades and professions given in the Milindapañha,[1] even so they were said to be capable, with brahmins and nobles, not merely of knowing that a certain new city was regular, faultless, perfect and pleasant, but also that " Able indeed must that architect have been by whom this city was built."

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[1] *Cf.* above, p. 91; below, p. 231.

[2] Jātaka, 419.

[3] *Ibid.*, 481.

[4] MV., viii., 1, 3.

[5] Jātaka, 546.

[6] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 3; Jātaka, 318, 481.

[7] *Ibid.*

According to the outlook of their own times, it would be thought that a woman was a prostitute on account of the working out of her karma. It was partly because of the notion of karma that the profession was frankly permitted by the social code of the day, and was more openly recognised then than now. Prostitution was regarded as a condition to which a person was reborn as a desert for some offence which, as it was thought, had overtaken her in a previous existence. But she need not remain in this condition. By willing to change, by willing to strive against the stream, and to cultivate the upward mounting way[2] and to live well, a woman could become different, could grow,[3] and escape from the prison of sense-desires.

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[1] Milindapañha, v., 4.

[2] Therīgāthā, verse 99.

[3] Saṃy. Nik., XXXVII., iii., 3, § 34.

PART II

THE BUDDHIST ORDER OF ALMSWOMEN

CHAPTER I

Admission into the Order

WITH the growing perception that their life had worth as an end in itself, there was liberated a spirit of independence in women and for women. It sought to express itself in domestic and worldly matters, many of which were also largely religious in character. It also soon became apparent that one of the drifts of this new-found power and freedom was away from purely domestic-religious occupations. In a country where life and religion are practically conterminous,[1] these had been regarded as a woman's normal duties, the amount of religion practised by her coinciding with her domestic functions, and not exceeding them. But now a new drift instead was set exclusively towards religion, towards leading a life devoted entirely to holiness and totally free of worldly interests, impediments and bonds.

As this freedom grew under Buddhism, women fell into two divisions: those who remained in the world as lay-votaries of the religion and those who went forth from the world into homelessness and became

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[1] *Cf.* Winternitz, *Die Frau in den Indischen Religionen*, Leipzig, 1920, vol. i., p. 2, for a concise expression of this well-known phenomenon: "Eine scharfe Grenzlinie zwischen Sitte Recht und Religion zu ziehen, ist in Indien geradezu unmöglich. Ebenso ist die ganze Struktur der Gesellschaft durch religiöse Ideen beeinflusst."

bhikkhunīs, nuns, sisters or almswomen. They will be called by the last name here on account of their quality of receiving alms. Over and above the leading circumstances which had evolved and which were making themselves felt, there was the peculiar appeal which religion has always made to women, and to which the newly enunciated teaching of Gotama formed no exception. Therefore the emergence of women as almswomen was a logical and almost inevitable development. These are the women to whom the remainder of this survey will be mainly devoted.

It has been said,[1] I think extremely unfairly, for there is nothing in the Vinaya or in the Psalms to support the statement, that women were largely attracted to the Order by the personal charm of Gotama. Enough women received the final impetus to join the Order from other teachers than Gotama[2] to prove that personal attraction towards him was not a determining factor of any great weight. Indeed, the story of the conversion of Sujātā[3] is the only one which suggests this kind of feeling for him. All the other women entrants seem sincerely to have felt the force of the doctrine or the force of disagreeable circumstances. It is said that Sujātā saw Gotama as she was returning from some Hindu astral festival, held probably in honour of Agni, and "her heart being drawn to him" she approached and sat down at his side while he finished his discourse. No women are recorded to have behaved like Vakkali;[4] because he realised that while dwelling in the house his desire to look constantly upon the perfection of the Master's visible body could never be sated, he gave that as his reason for entering the Order. It was the passion for Release (*moksha*, *mokkha*), very great at those times and as widespread as India itself, which largely drew women forward.

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[1] Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, London, 1921, vol. i., p. 248.

[2] See below, p. 201 ff.

[3] Therīgāthā, liii.

[4] Theragāthā Cmy. on ccv.

Freedom was the prize which some of them hoped to win.

Release, as understood in India at that time, implied Release from the whole round of becoming, not merely from a rebirth in hell, or in a heaven either for that matter. For neither of these two states, since each is governed by the Law of Causation as much as is this world, was thought to be final for the individual. Hence when he had worked off the causal efficacy of the karma by reason of which he was there, he would pass into another becoming. The process might be stopped by those who had the key. If not, it was infinite. A craven, cowardly dread of its endlessness was the attitude of the monkish in temperament, shrivelled in their vitality, weary of the world, barren of hope. In contradistinction to this is the Buddhist notion of Salvation, the consummation of the good life that each man and woman can will[1] to live, in their various life-spans (*āyu*) ever progressing towards it. It does not need the laying down of life; it needs the reaching out of life, the achievement only to be made fast and kept by guarded, organised and ceaseless effort. Arahanship, nirvāna, is the goal supreme. In order to win it there must be a "going out,"[2] but not the going out of life or of a "soul," but of the fires of lust (*rāga*), ill-will (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*), and of the cause *par excellence* of becoming again: desire, craving or grasping (*taṇhā*, *upādāna*).[3] Though Gotama probably believed in some form of survival, the survival of the good man,[4] liberated from ill,[5] he appears reticent on the discussion of topics of this nature.

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[1] There is no word for *will* in Pāli, but the idea is there.

[2] Nibbāna, Sanskrit *nirvāna*. The etymology of the word is doubtful: the primary sense seems to be the Vedic *nir* and *vā*, to blow. The extinguishing of a fire is a later and prevailing Buddhist conception of the term, where the main reference is to *vṛ* (to cover) and not to *vā* (to blow).

[3] Saṃy. Nik., xii., 7, § 66.

[4] *Ibid.*, xii., 7, § 67, "recluse or brahman"; *ibid.*, xvii., 1, § 10.

[5] *Ibid.*

In spite of its insistence on transience, and in spite of its replacing those appurtenances and external refuges which had hitherto acted as props to faith, by a teaching of reliance upon the self alone,[1] the women were not slow to embrace the Dhamma. It is justifiable to say that they were in Buddhism from the beginning, and hence affected the initial course of its history.

There were lay-women adherents from the quite early days. The first women to become lay-disciples by the formula of the holy triad[2] were the mother and the former wife of Yasa, the noble youth.[3] Their conversion took place soon after the first sermon, preached in the Deer-Park at Isipatana, and just after Yasa's father, the merchant, had become a lay-disciple, and Yasa himself had attained full enlightenment and had become freed from the *Āsavas* (Cankers). To these women Gotama spoke of exactly the same matters in exactly the same terms as when he was speaking to Yasa and his father.

During the five years that intervened between this episode and the deputation said to have been led by Mahāpajāpatī,[4] no mention is made in the Canon of any other women who became lay-disciples, or of any who attained arahanship.[5] It would appear then that Gotama did not speak from experience when he told Ānanda that " they are capable "[6] of gaining arahanship, but from faith and reasoning, fully justified by later events. On the other hand, there can be little doubt that there was a following of women lay-disciples during the first five years of the ministry, else it is hardly conceivable that Mahāpajāpatī should have been accompanied, as it is recorded, by so large a concourse,

[1] Mhp., ch. ii., § 33.

[2] Afterwards given up, MV., i., 28, 3.

[3] MV., i., 8, 1-3.

[4] CV., x., 1-3.

[5] Sainthood, ability, worth.

[6] CV., x., 1, 3.

so ardent in aspiration. Indeed, some part of the women's share in the growing movement may be filled in from the Commentaries. In the Therīgāthā Commentary twelve women are recorded to have left the world with her.[1] Again in the Theragāthā Commentary[2] it is said that after the Sermon on the Burning Gotama went to Rājagaha in mid-winter, and there converted Sāriputta and Mahā-Moggallāna. One day when he was staying in the Bamboo-Grove,[3] his father Suddhodana, having heard that he was preaching there, sent him a message to ask him to go to the palace. After a journey made by slow stages, "walking a yojana each day," to Kapilavatthu, he spoke with his relations and their attendants. The King was established in the fruit of the second stage of the Once-Returner, and his wife, Mahāpajāpatī, in the fruit of the first stage, the fruit of entering the Stream. Many women, possibly lay-adherents already, paid him homage, and his wife, Rāhula's mother, sent for him and did him reverence, while stories were told to him of the ways in which she, no doubt in accordance with the brahmanical custom,[4] had imitated his ascetic's life. But it does not seem that she was a genuine admirer of it, or she would have urged her son to join his father. Instead, as is told in the Vinaya,[5] she sent him to ask his father for his inheritance, "for the son is owner of his father's wealth." She could have had no idea that the result of this mission would be to render her virtually childless. For Rāhula entered the Order too, there to play an obscure part.

It may well have been that the idea of entering the Order as almswomen originated partly from the sorrow and loneliness of such women as Rāhula's mother, to all intents and purposes widows or motherless or both, coupled with their old-established right to participate with men in certain religious matters.

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[1] Therīgāthā Cmy. on iv., v.-x., xiii., xiv., xv., xviii., xxv.

[2] Theragāthā Cmy. on ccxxxiii.

[3] The gift of King Bimbisāra, MV., i., 22, 17.

[4] *Cf.* Winternitz, *Die Frau in den Indischen Religionen*, Leipzig, 1920, vol. i., p. 53.

[5] MV., i., 54, 1-2.

Probably the scheme had been seething in women's minds for some time before the actual proposition was first put forward. They were not so blinded by subservience and crushed by the unquestioning obedience of a supposed inferiority as to imagine that they were not so good as the men. To have been told so in all good faith must have seemed to them little short of farcical. They were so much wiser in so many respects, so much older and so much more experienced than the sons they bore; that feeling and knowing this, they could not have remained content with the low and humble position which had been theirs, limited by the confines of the house, if their real inclinations had prompted them to renounce their homes and seek the homeless sphere. Here, they were convinced that, like many men, they could find satisfaction.

It was not a novel idea, but more women were ready to renounce worldly ties than there had ever been before. They were even ready to meet the celibacy entailed by the fuller expression of personality which they were demanding. This willingness was but the emergence, on a larger scale, of a phenomenon to which Indians of the sixth century B.C. were accustomed. The notion of celibacy might be regarded as the first of the stages which had to be accepted by contemporary thought before the practice of women living in a religious community came to be fully adopted. But some such notions were already firmly embedded in Oriental thought. In the first place there had been female Wanderers[1] from very early days, and they usually lived a life of celibacy. The recognition of celibate women, living alone, followed from that of celibate men, living alone. For although marriage was essential to a Hindu, the idea of celibacy was by no means absent. The most orthodox Hindus professed this state for the first and fourth stages (*asrámas*) of their life, but were precluded by their belief that sons were needed for the adequate performance of their father's funeral rites and for the guarantee of their safe translation to heaven, from continuing in it for the whole of their life. In some of the Upanishads much value is placed on asceticism,[1] and the Taittirīya Upanishad (i., 9, and iii.) makes it of supreme value together with the study of the Vedas. And although it is a long step from the notion of individual asceticism or renunciation to that of a communal asceticism or renunciation,[2] intended to endure for the life-time of the member, by the time of the formation of the Buddhist Order the step had already been taken, for the Jain monastic and conventual systems were there and were celibate.

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[1] Majjhima, i., 305, *molibaddhā paribbājikā*; *cf.* Manu, viii., 363; *cf.* Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, London, 1903, p. 142.

Hence by the time of the rise of Buddhism the existence of nunneries in India was not without precedent. Mahāvīra did not keep community life as the exclusive privilege of men. He also permitted it to be a right for women. He organised his followers into four Orders—monks, nuns, lay-men and lay-women. These Orders fell into two main factions—the Digambaras (sky-clad), and the Śvetāmbaras (clad in white). The former differ from the latter in five main tenets,[3] and do not allow women to enter their Order, on the grounds that they are not competent to gain Release (*moksha*). In face of the difficulties, amounting to a slight on their spiritual efficiency, thrust at them by the Digambaras, more than twice as many women as men,[1] thirty-six thousand women to fourteen thousand men "left the world and became nuns" under the Śvetāmbara sect of the Jain Order. This demonstrates the crying need of the women of the time to escape, and to withdraw from the trivial round of life, or from the hardnesses and the losses of life, or from its licentiousness and luxury as well as from its grinding poverty, to some way of living that could offer opportunities for mental independence, the expectation of security and freedom from transmigration.

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[1] For information in the Upanishads *see A. B.* Keith, *Philosophy of the Veda*, Cambridge, Mass., 1925, pp. 514-515, 577-578.

[2] According to Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism*, London, 1914, p. 123, the institution of Vassa (the rain-retreat) was operative in bringing about this transition. "Paribrājakas of all denominations . . . used to observe it." And in a note he says: "We are not told whether the bhikkhu was to live alone or in company during this period."

[3] Sinclair-Stevenson, *Heart of Jainism*, Oxford, 1915, p. 80.

According to the Śvetāmbaras at their head was "Canda, a first cousin of Mahāvīra's, or, as other accounts have it, his aunt."[2] If the second alternative gives the true case, there is a curious parallelism to the reputed instigator of the Buddhist Order of Almswomen, whose foundation, as it is recorded in the Vinaya, was due to the initiative of Mahāpajāpatī the Gotamī, the aunt of Gotama. A good deal of uncertainty surrounds the actual foundation of the Buddhist Order of Almswomen, and its beginnings are wrapped in mists. It is possible that Mahāpajāpatī came late into the Order, after her husband had died,[3] and that the woman really to make the Order open for women was Yasodharā,[4] possibly the former wife of Gotama, who in her verse in the Apadāna[5] is said to represent many women and herself. This is the merest surmise. But in the Vinaya the woman called Mahāpajāpatī is represented as the leader of the women.[6] Whichever one it was, her many attempts and failures to win her heart's desire bear witness to her determination, no less than to the urgency of the need which prompted her.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

[3] Therīgāthā Cmy. on lv.

[4] Apadāna, vol. ii.; Therīapadāna, No. 30, p. 592; see below, p. 311.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] CV., x., 1, 1. A thorough treatment is given by the late Miss Lulius van Goor, *Die Buddhistische Non*, Leiden, 1915.

Five years after he attained Enlightenment Gotama is said to have received a deputation in the Nigrodha Park from a large company of women, who arrived led by Mahāpajāpatī the Gotamī,[1] his aunt and foster-mother, now widowed, all of them dressed in the yellow robes, travel-stained, their feet swollen. They too, from one cause or another, desired to taste the fruits of an ascetic's life, and for this end they wished to leave the world, and came to plead for the granting of this privilege. For so it was regarded. Three times they asked for admission into the Order, and always met with the same reply, "Enough O Gotamī, let it not please thee that women should be allowed to do so."[2] This refusal saddened Mahāpajāpatī, and she went away weeping. Gotama then went to Vesāli, and Mahāpajāpatī and her followers, most of them members of Gotama's own clan, the Sakyan, depressed, but not yet daunted, cut off their hair, adopting thereby the symbol of a life of renunciation, and put on the saffron-coloured robes and followed her, arriving bitterly sad and pitifully travel-stained. They were met by the gentle Ānanda who, shocked to see them in this doleful plight, but deeply impressed by their zeal and determination, undertook to plead their cause for them with Gotama. He asked Gotama three times, saying "It were well, Lord, if women were to have permission granted them to do as she desires." But it was of no avail and Gotama remained adamant. Goaded by his silence, Ānanda lighted on a fresh argument; appealing to Gotama's sense of justice and truth, he got him to admit that women were as capable as men of leading a contemplative life[3] and of treading on the paths of arahanship. It was a tremendous admission, but Gotama never hinted that woman had not the same chance as man or was in any way unfitted by her nature to attain nirvāna. The Way of Salvation was not closed to women.

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[1] CV., x., 1, 1-3.
[2] CV., x., 1, 1.
[3] CV., x., 1, 4.

> " And be it woman, be it man for whom
> Such chariot doth wait, by that same car
> Into Nirvāna's presence shall they come."[1]

The unequivocal frankness of this statement is not unique. Besides the *dictum*, already mentioned, that " they are capable," in the Anguttara Nikāya[2] Gotama is represented as saying that mother and son by following the Noble Eightfold Way are able to overcome the three Terrors. There seemed to have been no real doubt in his mind as to the equality of the powers of men and women.

He therefore acceded to Ānanda's proposition and opened the Order to women, on condition that Mahāpajāpatī should " take upon herself the Eight Chief Rules (*garudhammā*) " to be reckoned as her initiation.[3] On her enraptured acceptance of these terms as propounded to her by Ānanda, the faithful disciple returned to Gotama and gave him a report of the interview.

Indeed nothing but a heart of stone or a strong moral or intellectual conviction that the whole thing was wrong or unworkable could have withstood the ardour and pertinacity of the women. Gotama had neither, and he had the courage to try the experiment. Even if Mahāpajāpatī and her followers had known of his *dictum*, usually ascribed to a sense of profound disappointment in the Teacher's heart, that their admission to the Order would reduce its longevity by half, they might not have held back. Overweening ambition for a life of freedom was theirs. Fortunately Gotama, as it is recorded, did not express his *dictum*, now become famous, until Ānanda had returned to him.

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[1] Saṃy Nik., i., 5, § 6 ; *cf.* Majjhima, i., 169.

[2] Ang., i., 178.

[3] CV., x., 1, 4. Professor F. W. Thomas translates this as " extra rules." Usually a probationary period of two years was necessary before initiation as a senior could be undertaken.

It is couched in no measured terms, and seems *at first sight* to be instinct with dejection and mourning over shattered hopes. He is recorded to have said:[1] "If, Ānanda, women had not received permission to go out from the household life and enter the homeless state, under the doctrine and discipline proclaimed by the Tathāgata,[2] then would the pure religion, Ānanda, have lasted long, the good law would have stood fast for a thousand years. But since, Ānanda, women have now received that permission the pure religion, Ānanda, will not last so long, the good law will now stand fast for only five hundred years."[3] Although this statement is strongly worded, and is usually interpreted to mean that Gotama grudged women their entry into the Order, it would be mistaken to let one utterance colour our entire opinion of his attitude towards this situation. It should be remembered too, that monks edited the sayings attributed to Gotama, and they would naturally try to minimise the importance which he gave to women.

Although several other considerations might be urged to prove that he, being human and an Indian of the sixth century B.C., did rather tremble at the idea of creating an Order for Almswomen, there are none others to prove or to suggest that he did not actually want it.

In the first place this is the only instance of his being over-persuaded in argument.[4] He later yielded points out of regard for the world's comments upon various matters concerning the inter-relations of the two Orders, but he was never out-argued and never gave way on questions of behaviour which he deemed to be wrong. He had knowledge of the world, he had belonged to it, and could imagine the havoc its slanderous tongue might create in the Order, if chances for scandal-mongering were not cut out. Therefore he availed himself of the world's criticism, and pruned his system accordingly. It would also appear to him important to keep the sympathy of the laity in this new venture of advancing the transmission of the Dhamma. If monk-life showed signs of becoming significant, it could be used as a vehicle for gaining public interest in the new teaching. Further, provided that the laity were not hostile, these ends could be the more quickly accomplished by permitting women to take a share as almswomen. Although not himself a monk at heart, not made of the stuff of the true recluse, Gotama would doubtless have realised the prudence of establishing an Order of Almswomen alongside the Order of Almsmen, for in a world where numberless religious sects jostled one another,[1] the recluse or the ascetic made an appeal of no small strength to the imagination of the populace, and was an object of great veneration, a woman no less than a man. And the veneration in which the almspeople were held would be transferred to the religion which they followed.

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[1] CV., x., 1, 6.

[2] Derivation uncertain; lit. Thus-come, or Thus-gone. Lord Chalmers uses "Truthfinder." The term was first used in the Buddha's life-history immediately after he attained Enlightenment, and was designedly put into the mouth of Mahā-Brahmā himself; *cf.* Majjhima, i., 168; Lord Chalmers' translation, vol. i., p. 118, note.

[3] A thousand and five-hundred, not to be taken literally, but simply as meaning over a long time.

[4] *Cf.*, *e.g.*, his firmness on the question of the rehabilitation of the almswomen. A similar case for the almsmen occurs at MV., i. 38, 1.

Gotama would not have given his consent in any light vein to the establishment of an institution which, although not an innovation, because of the Jains, was yet considered advanced and unusual, but must have brought a searching scrutiny to bear on all sides of the problem before he finally pronounced his decision. Some weeks at least must have elapsed between the first deputation led by Mahāpajāpatī and the answer he finally gave to the women, conveyed through Ānanda; this in itself is sufficient to show that he was not rushed into giving a verdict against his better judgment. Although he knew that those delicately nurtured women who always travelled in carriages, but who were come across the North Indian plains on foot to him at Vesālī, were in real earnest, yet, compassionate as he was, it would have been in complete discordance with his character to have let people's wishes and desires, however lofty, supplant or overcome what he knew to be right. Nor was he likely to take any step which might strike at the integrity of the Order of Almsmen.

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[1] See Dialogues, i., p. 220, for a list of the religious sects, contemporary with Gotama.

The fact is, that although the Buddha's doctrine may not have been intended by him for the childlike and the intellectually backward, it was not intended by him for men and for men only. Gotama was far greater than that, and having begun to teach and having continued with ever-increasing success, he ardently wanted to make known a Gospel of the Choosing Will as the way (*magga*) for men and for women to take through this wayfaring (*saṃsāra*), by its means ever progressing in the way to the wayfaring's end, the end of ill, salvation. In his original teaching the simile of the Wheel had no place: the wheel-symbol was introduced later. He did not think of endeavour as a limited activity, or of the willer as necessarily returning whence he set out. He used the simile of the Way to imply progress, and the possibility for the Pilgrim to advance ever onwards, never to have to begin again and never to have to cease (*nirodha*). The attributes of the true ascetic, not the almsman, are such that he "advances upward and turns not back to lower things";[1] and because he is thought to be the same as other men, simply a few stages further on, and better and wiser, others are excluded by nothing in their nature from a similar development.[2] Gotama's description of his own progress along "an ancient path, an ancient road,"[1] provides an archetype for what he would deem the potentialities in every man or woman would enable him or her to attempt. The grip which this simile took on the minds of his disciples, religious and lay, is epitomised in the epithet Sugata,[2] the Wellfarer, which after the epithet Buddha, the Awakened, the Enlightened, is the name most commonly used to denote Gotama, the Founder. It was not without good reason that he was frequently hailed as "Lord of the Caravan,"[3] a title which savours of the road, the way.

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[1] Dialogues, iii., 49.

[2] *Cf.* Puggala-Paññatti, ch. i., 14, "(these persons are said to be capable of progress) who are capable of walking along what is recognised to be the true path in regard to things that are good."

Whether he would have invited women to join the Order if they had not taken the initiative is another question. The answer is incalculable. If he had taken this step it might have been interpreted as a blow at the acknowledged birthright of men to possess women as chattels, and in consequence the whole Order might have fallen to the ground. But in allowing women to enter in response to their request, he was not inaugurating an unheard-of scheme. He was aware of the existence of the Jain nunneries,[4] for Vesālī was a flourishing centre of the Jains, and he knew of the great reverence in which female Jain ascetics were held.[5] They must have aroused his curiosity and criticism and influenced his decision. He would have been assured that if he constituted an Order for his female followers he would not have been presenting a novel institution to a reluctant or reproachful world, but would simply have been more adequately providing for the expansion of an accredited development of his age. He knew that the social conditions of the times were reeking with luxuries and glutted with all manner of sensual pleasures; having experienced them himself and having judged them to be worthless burdens, he would not have wished to debar others, particularly not in the face of the strong representation made by the women, from standing free of the vanities by entering into the homeless state. He did not think of this as necessarily the best way for all, for all were not ripe for it, but as the way of the wise man. It may have been so, and at any rate the monastic system was a revolt, as it always is, against the extravagances of the times, to which he felt that all who were also in revolt should have a chance to belong. The time was come to form an Order of Almswomen.

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[1] Saṃy. Nik., xii., 7, § 65 (5). [2] See above, p. 46.

[3] Majjhima, i., 169; Saṃy. Nik., vi., 1, § 1.

[4] Frequent references to the Jain sect occur in the Buddhist canonical literature.

[5] Jain nuns are often termed "noble lady." Meyer, *Hindu Tales*, London, 1909, p. 127 and note; *cf.* Jātaka, 536.

Hence the circumstance which appears to require the more explanation is not that Gotama allowed women to enter the Order, but that he appears to have hesitated: an appearance due perhaps to the hand of the monk-editors of the texts. This may be called the first reason for his appearing reluctant.

Again it is possible that he held back, if he did, on account of his already biassed, though not culpably prejudiced, view of women. He was born a Hindu, and ancestry, traditions and education cannot be shaken off simply by the desire to be quit of them. "If wishes were horses beggars would ride." With mental growth intense and bitter intellectual dislike and contumely may be formed for the deep-seated habits of mind and inherited beliefs, accompanied by a pressing desire to discard them utterly. But man is bound by the chains of the past and these go clanging in his ears too insistently to be ignored. He is not so much an "island" as an atom in an organic whole, whose "present is laden with the past," a restless active burden in very truth, which in some cases the present is constantly trying to dislodge, or at the worst to overlay. It is conceivable that some such conflict was wrestling in Gotama's mind. He himself was convinced that women are as capable as men of attaining arahanship,[1] but there was the dead-weight of public opinion to persuade. The tradition of the past strove against fairness and justice and common sense as he saw them given in the present, all demanding to effect the reform, called in later days and in different climes "The Emancipation of Woman."[2] Wherever a movement of this nature has been staged it has always provided a challenging topic, inciting the adversaries to take up the cudgels equally violently on either side. It is a lamentably ambiguous phrase, but it becomes pregnant with meaning in the dazzling rays of the Buddhist sun. Doubtless Gotama was more than half-consciously aware of the possibility of a coming struggle between the sexes, and more than half-consciously foreshadowed a sympathy for the women which ranks as one of his greatest claims to fame as a benefactor of the human race. This underground current swept to the surface in the words which he spoke to comfort King Pasēnadi of Kosala, not yet converted to Buddhism, when Queen Mallikā gave birth to a daughter:

> "A woman-child, O Lord of men, may prove
> Even a better[3] offspring than a male."[4]

But although Gotama was a holder of these "new views" concerning women, until the conflict was resolved the old notions which had been prevalent for centuries clung to him. He might well have wondered if it could be possible for women to relinquish their ancient traditional function in favour of a life of hard spiritual endeavour. The life which they would have to lead henceforth was to be celibate and totally unencumbered. In a word, motherhood was to be extirpated. But would its call, grounded in tradition and echoing down long ages, prove to be irresistible ? The question was crucial. Disaster would follow as night follows day with any in the Order who heard the call of motherhood supreme. The current views, to which Gotama must have been accustomed from his early years, probably swayed him and held him back for a space; but he was so firmly convinced that it was possible for women to enter the stream and strive across the seas of existence to the shore of Nirvāna, the Utterly Well, that he did not believe that that other wave need surge up in a swamping flood. It perhaps only stood for man's ideal for woman and did not touch the limits of her being at all. These kinds of considerations probably weighed in his decision to take the definite step of opening the Order to almswomen.

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[1] CV., x., 1, 4.

[2] The definition which perhaps approximates most closely to the Buddhist point of view is that of Weininger, *Sex and Character*, London edition, p. 65: "Emancipation . . . is . . . the deep-seated craving to acquire man's character, to attain his mental and moral freedom, to reach his real interests and his creative power."

[3] *Seyyā*.

[4] Saṃy. Nik., iii., 2, § 6.

Arising out of this second reason for his apparent hesitation is a third, which might be regarded in this light: that although he naturally desired the perpetuity of the Order for as long as possible, yet, considering the craving for Release at that time, half the number of years (five hundred) under the conditions now presenting themselves might be more valuable than twice the number (a thousand) under the old. Nothing is permanent; better strike while the iron is hot; better point the Way to Salvation to as many earnest seekers as possible while everything goes to prove that such a showing would be acceptable, than wait until the opportunity had passed, perhaps beyond recall, and even the demand had diminished, perhaps to vanishing point. By the proximity of the Order of Almswomen character-forming tendencies might be produced of a more powerful nature than they could be in an Order of Almsmen only; for the constant intercommunication between the two Orders would expose both almsmen and almswomen to greater temptations, and consequently to the necessity for exercising greater self-control. But those who have control of themselves, and of their senses and passions are on a fair way to attaining nirvāna, the supremely blissful, the peace which passes understanding. Self-mastery, the taming of the self,[1] and formation of character are among the highest ideals set forth by Buddhism; and Gotama might have conceived that an added reason for admitting women would be on account of the more stringent discipline that their presence would necessitate.

As it turned out there were almsmen and almswomen who fell into "sin,"[2] but records have survived of others who suffering temptation willed to stand against it and succeeded.[3] The test of character is for him who has met and withstood temptation, rather than for him who has never been faced by it at all. Battle and victory of the spirit bear a richer fruit than monotonous placidity ever can. Gotama had had his temptation from which he had come out triumphant.[4] The experience brought him knowledge of liberation from the senses. Might not the facing of temptations prepare others also for the final liberation, and so be immensely valuable in the effort of reaching after the goal?

It may be too that as he took over so much from the brahmins he was also inclined not to do what they did not do; and as they had no organised provision for women who wished to secede from the world it might appear as if he, too, at the beginning tried to stand out against forming any community for women recluses. This does not however yield a very cogent argument, for there was much in the brahmanical institutions, such as prayers, rites, oblations and sacrifices, which revolted him. Nor did he show any signs of discouraging the formation of a Buddhist Order of Almsmen where the brahmins had none. Not even the most orthodox and ascetic among them had ever demanded to be bound together under a monastic system. Yet the material for forming an Order was at hand, for it was common for the various teachers of all the religious sects to gather groups of disciples round them. Hence if all the members of a group wanted it, it would be quite feasible to turn them into the nucleus of an Order, united by definite codes and rules and by a common discipline, in a way which would never have been possible if they had merely come fortuitously together. The tremendous step would then have been taken of being together on account of belonging together, instead of on account of happening together.

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[1] *E.g.*, Dhp., 33-43, 103-105; Dialogues, iii., 55; Therīgāthā, xxxii.; Saṃy. Nik., vii., 1, § 2.

[2] MV., i., 60; i., 67; i., 78; V., iii., pp. 16, 205, 206; V., iv., 211 ff.

[3] *E.g.*, Theragāthā Cmy. on xxxiv., ccxxiii.; Therīgāthā Cmy. on lxxi.

[4] Majjhima, i., 158, 169; Saṃy. Nik., vi., 1, § 1.

What Gotama wanted was success, and as he saw that the brahmanical system carried success with it, it would have been legitimate, nay, sensible, to imitate it in so far as that was compatible with what he intended to destroy. To create something new in its place he had to go further than the brahmins and work on a larger scale.

Conscious of all this he would have realised that now was the time to open the Order without distinction of sex, as it had been opened earlier without distinction of caste, and so to obtain a large membership. It was not that he wanted a large membership out of any spirit of rivalry with the other religious sects which had also broken away from brahminism,[1] but that he wanted to point out the Way to Salvation to mankind, the Way of Will, which is the Noble Eight-fold Way.

What Gotama did for women shines as a bright light in the history of freedom: and it brought its own rewards, not fugitive but lasting. For the contribution made by women to Buddhism, though it has often been neglected or under-estimated, was a real one. Even if many of the first women members of the Order were the wives and mothers and daughters of the male members, and if they therefore to some extent profited by their membership, yet they also vastly strengthened and consolidated the movement by their devoted adherence and generosity, output as preachers and lives of arahanship. They had determined to enter the Order, and once in they determined that it, that they, should win success. They were not of the stuff that is deterred by hard sayings, for theirs was the cause of freedom, for themselves and for others, both from the drudgery of the world[1] and from rebirth.[2]

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[1] *Cf.* Dialogues, iii., 56: "Wherefore, Nigrodha, I speak thus neither because I wish to gain pupils. . . ."

It has been propounded, as another argument that Gotama grudged women their entry into the Order, that this important event did not draw any great sermons from him or inspire him to any momentous utterances. After he had preached to the first male disciples he is said to have continued to deliver sermons, redolent with the glory of his recent enlightenment. These so-called sermons were probably more like talks, addressed not to crowds, but personally, to individuals. He would pick out different people from among his audiences, address them by name, and ask for their view on the matter under discussion. The Teacher swept all before him in the consuming fervour of his conviction, and when he found that his doctrine was welcomed and understood by some at least who heard it, encouragement kindled in him to go on and go out on the great missionary enterprise, "Go ye, therefore now, almsmen, and wander for the happiness (*sukha*) of the many, for the welfare of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, for the happiness and for the welfare of devas and men. Let not two of you go by the same way."[1]

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[1] *E.g.*, Therīgāthā, xxi.

[2] Many of the Therīgāthā speak of Insight won: *i.e.*, Insight into the Truth of Becoming, which is the knowledge which sets free from rebirth.

These are the grandiloquent words which have come down to us. It is more likely that Gotama said something like " Go out now to the villages near by, and as there are so few of you, no two of you should go by the same way. Speak of the new ideas that I have juſt been telling you about to any one who will liſten."

The passage of time by itself would account for the difference between the outpourings at the admission of the firſt almsmen and the relative dryness at that of the almswomen. At firſt Gotama was not confident that his doctrine would be accepted; he muſt have feared that it would have been too hard, for between attaining Enlightenment under the Bo-tree (*Ficus religiosa*) and preaching his firſt sermon, the Doctrine of the Noble Eightfold Way was subſtituted for the Doctrine of the Chain of Causation. But during the firſt five years of his miniſtry his fears vanished and his confidence was eſtablished. Why, then, should he give the women a special sermon ? His teachings by now were widely known to the many-folk, otherwise the women would not have flocked in such large numbers to ask for admission.

An argument of this kind cannot be maintained unless it had also happened that he never preached at all to women. But there is plenty of evidence to show that this was not the case. During all the years that remained he conſtantly spoke to and " gladdened " individual women, held religious discourses with them, and also gave inſtruction to them as well as to the men in his own inimitable ſtyle. For " juſt as, almsmen, the great ocean has but one taſte, the taſte of salt, even so, almsmen, this doctrine and discipline has but one flavour, the flavour of emancipation."[2] It muſt therefore be the same for all, though often enough emphasis was laid on different aspects to suit the needs of different people.

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[1] MV., i., 11.

[2] CV., ix., 1, 4, repeated Udāna, Sona Thera, 5, trans. D. M. Strong, 1902, p. 78; and *cf.* Majjhima, i., 140.

Regarded as system-makers or as adversaries of brahmanism, Mahāvīra and after him Gotama were well-advised to entrench themselves as firmly as they could in the enemy's camp. No doubt, had Gotama also organised his lay-devotees, men and women, as thoroughly as Mahāvīra did, Buddhism would not have declined in the land of its birth, but would have continued, even though diminished, as Jainism has done, down to the present day. It is a tragedy for India that Buddhism has died out there. A real binding together of the followers of the religion, more strongly knit than the lay and religious adherents under Buddhism actually were, would have been of inestimable value in rendering it impregnable to the insidious appeals and altogether different ways of satisfying religious, mental and physical cravings which were offered by Hinduism. A religion which admits devas, but which does not assign to them or to any one of them, a supreme place in the cosmical scheme; which does not consider them to be in any special relationship to man, operative for his good or ill, in any way responsible for him or useful to him; which regards them as beings, "fellow-men of other worlds"[1] who have simply attained to some stage on the way to Nirvāna, and since all is impermanent as themselves subject to the law of arising and ceasing to be;[2] a religion which calls in question man's notions of what he had thought was *his* and of what he *was*, reiterating that the very man (*attā*) is neither body nor soul; a religion which lays unremitting stress upon suffering and impermanence, while the great attraction of most forms of religion lies in their proffered expectation of permanence, must have some external supports if it too is not to become impermanent. A community or sect of people who are known to hold the same views, or to stand for the same opinions and principles, or to believe in the same religious teaching comes to possess a stability and high degree of self-preservative efficiency and an immunity from that loss of functional activity which an individual, acting in isolation, has to encounter. Common interests and aspirations prepare the ground for a real solidarity. Thus it is that a certain power of resistance to disintegrating forces becomes vested in any monastic system, the more so if this includes a conventual system and both are combined with a properly organised body of laity. A protest is entered against the contemporaneous social evils, a challenge is thrown down to them; and through them, the religious life of the old order is shown up to be, if not as wrong-headed as in this case the reformers themselves believed, certainly not an instrument of unquestionable validity.

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[1] C. A. F. Rhys Davids, "Buddhism and the Negative," *J.P.T.S.*, 1924-27, p. 13 (offprint).

[2] *Cf.* Iti-vuttaka, 83.

It was in this way that Buddhism became not only an antagonist of Brahmanism, that field of ceremonial actions and prohibitions; a revolt against the caste system, then beginning to draw India into its clutches; but also an attempt to promote the cause of rights for women, for which in a spirit which was startlingly modern the women themselves were beginning to fight.[1]

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[1] Therīgāthā Appendix, 2; Saṃy. Nik., v., § 2, and see below, p. 164.

CHAPTER II

THE EIGHT CHIEF RULES FOR ALMSWOMEN

THE admission of women into the Order was granted by Gotama on condition, as it is recorded, that Mahāpajāpatī should take upon herself the Eight Chief Rules[1] (*garudhammā*). Her acknowledgment that she would do so was to count as her initiation and also as a tacit acceptance of responsibility for her followers. These were the first rules to be made for the almswomen; while ignoring certain aspects of their calling such as any insistence on chastity, and the possession of only eight belongings, they deal with certain necessary obligations expected of women who wished to dedicate their lives to religion and to live in a community of fellow-devotees. The Rules were precise and definite and were designed to preserve and promote the integrity of the women's Order as a body independent of its relations with the secular world. Only those candidates were admitted who after examination were found to be suitable, and certain regular observances were instituted which it was prescribed that all members should follow. Three rules and part of another, all of far-reaching importance, were the same for the almswomen as for the almsmen, but so constituted for the almswomen as to emphasise the absence of any final power in them to ratify their own proceedings. Two demanded the acknowledgment of unrequited veneration to be shown to the almsmen; and one and part of another placed the carrying out of two ceremonies, essential for the almswomen, exclusively into the hands of the almsmen; and one decreed that Vassa (the rains) should not be kept in a place where there was no almsman. It was clear from the beginning that the almswomen were not to be independent of the almsmen, but dependent upon them for the proper performance of most of their ceremonies and for the authorisation of them all.

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[1] CV., x., 1, 4.

Many other rules, incorporated in the Vinaya and, in particular, in that section of it known as the Bhikkhunī-vibhanga, came to be formulated as time went on and as occasion arose. These differ from the Eight Chief Rules in having originated in some particular offence, or in some breach of etiquette which had actually been committed, and complained of; for the Eight Chief Rules are not the outcome of particular offences, but embody a large part of the ceremonial and disciplinary aspects of Gotama's monastic system. As such they were framed to meet some of the essential factors of a conventual life. The fact was never lost sight of that this was to be allowed to expand only under the *ægis* of a monastic rule; it might work in close connection with it, but was always to remain its subordinate.

The Eight Chief Rules were as follows:[1]

> I. An almswoman, even if of a hundred years standing, shall make Salutation to, shall rise up in the presence of, shall bow down before, and shall perform all proper duties towards an almsman, if only just initiated. This is a rule to be revered and reverenced, honoured and observed, and her life long never to be transgressed.
>
> II. An almswoman is not to spend the rainy season (of Vassa) in a district in which there is no almsman. This is a rule . . . never to be transgressed.
>
> III. Every half-month an almswoman is to await from the Chapter of Almsmen two things,

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[1] CV., x., 1, 4.

the asking as to (the date of) the Uposatha ceremony, and the (time when the almsman) will come to give the exhortation. This is a rule . . . never to be transgressed.

IV. After keeping the rainy season (of Vassa), the almswoman is to hold Pavāraṇā (to enquire whether any fault can be laid to her charge) before both Sanghas—as well that of the Almsmen as that of the Almswomen—with respect to three matters, namely what has been seen, and what has been heard, and what has been suspected. This is a rule . . . never to be transgressed.

V. An almswoman who has been guilty of a serious offence is to undergo the Manatta discipline towards both the Sanghas (Almsmen and Almswomen). This is a rule . . . never to be transgressed.

VI. When an almswoman, as novice, has been trained for two years in the Six Rules, she is to ask leave for the Upasampadā initiation from both Sanghas (as well that of the Almsmen as that of the Almswomen). This is a rule . . . never to be transgressed.

VII. An almswoman is on no pretext to revile or abuse an almsman. This is a rule . . . never to be transgressed.

VIII. From henceforth official admonition by almswomen of almsmen is forbidden, whereas the official admonition of almswomen by almsmen is not forbidden. This is a rule . . . never to be transgressed.

These will now be discussed in detail.

I. Salutation.

"An almswoman, even if of a hundred years' standing shall make salutation to . . . and perform all proper duties towards an almsman, if only just initiated."[1]

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[1] CV., x., 1, 4.

The alleged innate superiority of the male is paramount, but the humiliation of the women would have been more bitter, had they also not been imbued with the conventional conception of the relation of the sexes. The rule is the outcome of an age-old and widespread tradition rather than a prudent provision to keep women in their places. It amounted to this, as did the later rule prohibiting almswomen from sitting in the presence of almsmen without asking leave, unless they were ill,[1] because the old tradition, impregnated with the superiority of men, amounted to this. Deference to be shown by women to men cannot therefore be regarded as a special *vis a tergo* in the formulation of this rule; it is but a particularisation of the current views on the relation of the sexes. But it is highly significant, for salutation in the Orient bears the stamp of a scrupulous etiquette, and is as symbolical as it is expressive of the intricacies of the social structure.

Later Mahāpajāpatī is said to have asked Gotama through the helpful Ānanda whether the observance of the rules of seniority should not hold for the almsmen and almswomen according to their status and not according to their sex. "This is impossible, Ānanda, and unallowable that I should so order. . . . You are not, almsmen, to bow down before women, . . . or to perform towards them those duties that are proper (from an inferior to a superior)."[2] This is the rebuff which Gotamī received for her attempt, born of her feministic instincts, to secure the relaxation of the first of the Eight Chief Rules. Had she succeeded, perfect equality of almsman as almsman and almswoman as almswoman, based on each one's standing in the Order, would have been the result. But Gotama could not raise woman, even though she had put off her sex, to this level plane. Hence there remained in consequence only those acts, all of a sensual nature and far from the spirit of monasticism, mentioned in the Cullavagga,[1] the performance of which rendered the offending almsman " one who is not to be saluted by the Chapter of Almswomen." Otherwise an almsman of whatever standing was always to be saluted by an almswoman of whatever standing. If an almswoman committed a similar offence, as the six almswomen (*chabbaggiya bhikkhuniyo*) who were always giving trouble are recorded to have done, the Blessed One is said to have allowed the almsmen " to prohibit her from entering a Vihāra."[2] To Western minds this would appear a rather more damaging penalty than that meted out to the almsmen. Yet this apparent discrepancy was intentional; and merely serves to emphasise the value attached to salutation, and through it to the position of the male.

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[1] V., iv., p. 343; *cf.* below, p. 290.

[2] CV., x., 4, 1.

II. Rainy Season.

" An almswoman is not to spend the Rainy Season (of Vassa) in a district where there is no almsman."[3]

Almsmen naturally were allowed to spend the Rainy Season in places where there were no almswomen, for their presence was not needed at the almsmen's ceremonies of confession and the like, whereas the almsmen's presence was needed for the almswomen's true and full performance of these duties. This rule is the same as the fifty-sixth Bhikkhunī-Pācittiya.[4] This is said to have been formulated on the occasion when some almswomen returned to Sāvatthi, having spent Vassa in the country. The Sāvatthi almswomen asked the incoming ones if the Exhortation or teaching (*ovāda*) had been effective (*iddha*) at the place where they had been for Vassa. They replied: " How could it have been effective, for there was no almsman there ?"

If the term *ovāda* be taken in its technical sense of

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[1] CV., x., 9, 1.

[2] CV., x., 9, 2.

[3] CV., x., 1, 4; *cf.* below, p. 268 ff.

[4] V., iv., p. 313. A pācittiya offence was one requiring expiation.

Exhortation,[1] it would be necessary for the almswomen to be somewhere where there was an almsman, for the Exhortation had to be given every half-month and could only be given by an almsman; and although travelling for urgent reasons was permissible during Vassa,[2] it would have been thought advisable to restrict it as much as possible. If the term be taken in its more liberal sense of teaching or instruction, it raises the question of the almswomen's adequacy to teach the almswomen, on which doubt is also thrown by the account of Nandaka's sermon.[3] If they were inadequate to teach one another it would then seem as if the instruction given by the almswomen was, with the exception of teaching the novices, restricted to teaching the laity. In either sense the relationship involved is far from reciprocal, but it follows logically from the way of settling the question of salutation. It is what would be expected from a study of the social background, whose influence was such as almost inevitably to colour the nature of the interdependence of the two Orders.

III. Uposatha Ceremony and Exhortation.

"Every half-month (*anvaddhamāsaṃ*) an almswoman is to await two things from the Chapter of Almsmen, the asking (as to the date) of the Uposatha Ceremony, and the time (when the almsman) will come to give the Exhortation (*ovāda*)."[4]

This is the same as the fifty-ninth Bhikkhunī-Pācittiya.[5] Some of the almswomen at Sāvatthi had failed to ask for these two things, and the almsmen were annoyed and complained, as they occasionally did,[6] with the result that in this case failure to ask for these two things was made a pācittiya offence.

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[1] See below, p. 126 ff.

[2] *Cf.* below, p. 271.

[3] Majjhima, iii., 270-277 and *cf.* below, p. 152, note 5; and p. 278 ff.

[4] CV., x., 1, 4.

[5] V., iv., p. 315.

[6] *Cf.*, V., iv., pp. 306, 343, 344.

Part of the Uposatha Ceremony consisted in making Confession,[1] and no distinction was drawn here between the two sexes. The almswomen were expected to attend it as regularly as the almsmen and to confess to the same offences asked from a list, and to undergo the same penances in order to wipe them out. Inequality enters however in the right of deciding whether the day for holding the Ceremony was to be the fourteenth or fifteenth day of the month. That rested solely with the almsmen, for only they could read the riddle of the moon, and the Ceremony took place on the nights of the full and the dark moon. In addition to this, although it was not explicitly stated that confession as implied in this third rule had to be made to the Chapter of Almsmen, later events show that this was the original plan. It was only as time went on that certain events occurred which decided Gotama to modify this ruling. Some time after Mahāpajāpatī had accepted the Eight Chief Rules it was discovered that the Pātimokkha,[2] the recitation of whose two hundred and twenty-seven rules was the essential part of the Uposatha Ceremony,[3] was not being recited to the almswomen.[4] It is recorded that Gotama said that the almsmen might recite it to them, but such a scandal and talk arose among the laity because the almsmen went to the almswomen's residence, that Gotama had to forbid this procedure and to allow the almswomen to recite the Pātimokkha to the almswomen.[5] The almsmen and the almswomen apparently made use of the opportunity given by the recitation of the rules to confess to any offence which they might have committed, or which, as they would have said, had overcome them,[1] the round of becomings being sometimes held to be solely responsible.[2] Confession and the due treatment[3] of it tears the offence from the offender, and no one who wished to be on the road to Release should be allowed to miss the chance to confess, and to do the penance whose object it was to lead to control in the future by the restraint of the code (*pātimokkha samvara samvuto*). "And inasmuch as you, Nigrodha, looking upon it as an offence, confess according to your deeds, we accept your confession. For that, Nigrodha, is the custom in the discipline of the Ariyans [noble ones], that whosoever looks upon his fault as a fault and rightfully confesses it, shall in the future attain to self-restraint."[4]

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[1] Vinaya Texts, translation, vol. i., introduction, pp. x-xii.

[2] "It is the beginning, it is the face (*mukhaṃ*), it is the principal (*pamukhaṃ*) of good qualities." MV., ii., 3, 4; *cf.* also Pācittiya, 73, where it is a *rule*. In the Buddhist Canon it was doubtless used in the sense of *code*. This is the meaning ascribed to it by Rhys Davids, in E.R.E. art. Pātimokkha.

[3] MV., ii., 3, 1.

[4] CV., x., 6, 2.

[5] CV., x., 6, 2.

Therefore it was important that the Pātimokkha should be regularly observed: being thus a function of real value in itself, it cannot legitimately be said that it was given fictitious importance by being made the central part of the Uposatha Ceremony, as is Dutt's view.[5]

Therefore if the almsmen could not recite the Pātimokkha to the almswomen, the almswomen must. This is another instance of the way in which the almswomen, by force of circumstances, acquired an equal right with the almsmen. They had not been on a level to begin with, for then they had had to confess to the almsmen, whereas an almsman who recited the Pātimokkha in a seated assembly (of almsmen) before an almswoman committed a dukkata offence.[1] He perpetrated a similar offence if he recited it in a seated assembly (of almsmen) before a *sikkhamānā* (that is a woman candidate on her two years' probationary course of instruction before asking for the Upasampadā Ordination), a *sāmaṇera*, a *sāmaṇerī* (male and female novice); before one against whom expulsion had been pronounced for failure to see or atone for an offence, or for refusal to renounce a false doctrine; before one who had abandoned the precepts; a eunuch; one who had furtively attached himself to the Sangha; or before an hermaphrodite.

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[1] Udambarikā Sīhanāda Suttanta, § 22; Dialogues, iii., 55; *cf.* Saṃy. Nik., xii., 7, § 70; xvi., 6, § 1.

[2] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 96, where the novice says to the Elder Kosambivāsī Tissa, who in carelessly tossing a fan into the air had put out the novice's eye, "The round of existences alone is to be blamed for this."

[3] MV., ii., 3, 4-8. This part was obviously inserted later. See Vinaya Texts translation, vol. i., introduction, pp. xv-xvi.

[4] Udambarikā Sīhanāda Suttanta, § 22. Dialogues iii., 55; *cf.* Saṃy. Nik., xii., 7, § 70; xvi., § 6 (1).

[5] Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism*, ch. iv.

Ten grounds for suspending the Pātimokkha are given in the Anguttara.[2] They consist of there being in the Assembly one who had committed a pārājika offence; one who had not been ordained; one who had rejected the teaching; a eunuch; or one who had abused the almswomen; and of the inquiries against these being still unfinished.

Apparently the almsmen felt themselves so superior to the almswomen that their Pātimokkha was not to be held before them or before a woman probationer. Yet a certain amount of credit accrues to them for preventing an abuser of the almswomen from hearing the recitation. This suggests that they thought such a man wrong and unworthy: but that they should also think that anyone who could behave so badly should be precluded from taking part in one of the most important ceremonies indicates the degree of ill-favour in which they held him.

Exhortation (*ovāda*) was looked upon as a serious duty. By its very nature it was not reciprocal: it consisted in the almsmen's asking the almswomen if they were keeping up the *garudhammā*, those rules which applied directly to the almswomen and only indirectly to the almsmen.

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[1] MV., ii., 36, 1.

[2] Ang., v., pp. 70, 71.

Four main rules came to be prescribed[1] for the proper carrying out of the Exhortation.

(i.) Exhortation must not be held by an almsman not properly deputed.[2] Eight requisites for exhorting the almswomen should be found in him.[3] He must be a virtuous man ; of great wisdom; acquainted with both sets of rules in all detail; he must use noble words and speech; and must have the ability by his preaching upon the Dhamma to arouse, incite and gladden the community of almswomen; he must be someone whom the almswomen like (*yebhuyyena bhikkhunīnaṃ piyo hoti manāpo*); he must never have committed a grave offence with anyone who has gone forth into homelessness and put on the yellow robe; and he must have been in the Order for twenty years or more. Thus it appears that he was to be a man of good reputation with a high diploma of conduct in life; and the idea that just anyone would do was here put out of court. This rule reflects great credit, and is an instance of Gotama's deep concern where the interests of the women were involved.

In the early part of the Cullavagga there appears the ruling that an almsman against whom the *tajjaniyakamma*[4] had been carried out was not to accept the office of giving the Exhortation to the almswomen, and if he had accepted it he ought not to fulfil it.[5] An almsman was also said to have become disqualified if he had incurred the penalty of the *tassapāpiy-yasikākamma*,[6] the punishment for habitual quarrelling, for excessive stupidity leading to breaches of discipline, improper association with women, non-observance of the principal rules that regulate the life of an almsman, non-observance of the right conduct, heterodoxy, and speaking evil of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha.[1] Later in the Cullavagga it is said that all the almsmen except the stupid, the sick and the journeying were to "accept the duty of holding Exhortation to the almswomen."[2] In the same passage it is said that the dweller in the jungle was allowed to appoint a time and place for the meeting, saying "There will I perform it."

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[1] Pācittiya Dhamma, 21-24.

[2] V., iv., p. 51.

[3] *Ibid.*, and Ang., iv., pp. 279-280.

[4] Act of Rebuke, see CV., i., 1, 1.

[5] CV., i., 5, 1.

[6] One of the *adhikaraṇa-samathā*, the settlings of questions that have arisen. Explained at Majjhima, ii., 249 ; *cf.* CV., i., 2 ff; iv., 11 ; Ang., iv., p. 347 ; and see below, p. 242.

(ii.) Exhortation must not be held after sunset.[3] This rule is the outcome of an amusing episode, which at the same time throws an illuminating side-light on a critical spirit directed by the almswomen towards their teaching. On one occasion they heard that Cūḷapanthaka had been deputed to exhort them. They immediately said: "The teaching will not be successful to-day. Cūḷapanthaka will be repeating his *udāna* (solemn utterance) over and over again."[4] He then came and asked them, first, if they were all there (or in unison, *samagga*), and then if they were keeping up the *garudhammā*. On their acknowledgment he said, "This, sisters, (*bhaginiyo*) is the Exhortation,"[5] and repeated his *udāna* over and over again:

"To the seer who has his mind collected and earnest, trained (*sikkato*),
Sorrows happen not. Such a serene one is always self-collected."

The almswomen in effect said, "We knew how it would be, we told you so." Their gibes reached his ears, and to disprove them he made a great show in the air, for he had this power.[1] This induced a complete *volte-face* in the almswomen, who now exclaimed, "Wonderful, oh, wonderful, never has the *ovāda* been so successful before," and they stayed and listened to his preaching until the evening, when he dismissed them saying, "Go, sisters." But because they returned to the city early in the morning, the lay-people complained. Their complaints which as a general rule reached Gotama through the almsmen or the almswomen, and to which he is always represented as attending promptly and effectively, resulted in this rule: "It is a pācittiya for an almsman unless sanctioned at sunset to give exhortation to the almswomen."

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[1] CV., i., 4, 1.
[2] CV., x., 9, 5.
[3] V. iv., p. 54.
[4] *Cf.* below, p. 279.
[5] This was the recognised preliminary step in conducting the *ovāda*. If the almswomen were to say that they had not been keeping up the *garudhammā*, then the almsman should go through the rules one by one. See Vinaya Texts translation, vol. i., p. 21, note 2.

(iii.) Exhortation must not be held in the almswomen's quarters.[2] This marks a departure from the original ruling given in the third of the *garudhammā*. There is documentary evidence for a definite episode which led to the transition from the ruling that the almsmen should come to give it to the almswomen to the ruling that these should go to the Chapter of Almsmen to receive it. The six almsmen who were always being troublesome had come and preached in the quarters of the six almswomen who were always being troublesome. These said to their colleagues, "Ladies, they come and preach here (*idh'eva*) to us what they have to say." In the Almsmen's Vinaya it is said that the almswomen told the almsmen and the pious ones were shocked. This is repeated in the Almswomen's Vinaya: here it is said that the pious almswomen were shocked and complained to the almsmen. No doubt both accounts refer to one and the same episode. It was after this that the rule was made prescribing that the almswomen must always go to the almsmen to receive Exhortation, and all together.[3]

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[1] *Cf.* Theragāthā, ccxxxvi.

[2] V., iv., p. 55; and V., iv., p. 314.

[3] This clause is omitted from the Almsmen's Vinaya.

But an exception had to be made. Mahāpajāpatī was on one occasion ill.[1] Gotama is said to have come to see her and asked her how she was. She said that formerly almsmen were allowed to come and preach the Dhamma to them, but since this had been made a pācittiya offence by the Lord there was no comfort to be had. In view of this expression of longing to hear the teaching, it must have appeared sensible to Gotama to let the almsmen come for this purpose to the women's quarters when they were ill, for this is the codicil appended to the rule.

To a long and intricate history belong some of the details of the initial discipline of the almswomen in connection with their going to receive the Exhortation. In the first place it is simply told in the Cullavagga[2] " that at that time the almswomen did not go to the Exhortation." A decree, followed by a threat of punishment for negligence, is said to have been pronounced by the Blessed One, to the effect that an almswoman must not omit to go to the Exhortation. This seems to have precipitated the whole body of almswomen to receive the Exhortation in the almsmen's quarters, greatly to the indignation of the lay-people, who put the worst interpretation upon it. Therefore Gotama, ever mindful of what the world is reported to have thought, declared that only four or five almswomen were to go together.[3] But, as it is stated, the people still did not cease from criticism, and the company of almswomen had to be reduced to two or three. Moreover it was made clear that the object of their visit was not to receive the Exhortation then and there, but to make a formal appointment for the whole Chapter of Almswomen to go together to receive it from an almsman.[4]

The manner of approaching the almsman by the almswomen who were come to make the arrangements is described in some detail. It demanded an attitude of reverence as from an inferior to a superior. It is probable that here the reverence required was primarily for male over female and only derivatively for knowledge over ignorance. "Let them go up to some one almsman, and arrange their robes over one shoulder, and sitting down on their heels, let them stretch forth their joined palms and address him thus: "The Chapter of Almswomen thus salutes the feet of the Chapter of Almsmen, and requests permission to come for the sake of the Exhortation being held; may that be granted, they say, to the Chapter of Almswomen."[1] They then had to discover whether an almsman had been appointed to hold it; if one had, they must go to him, but if not, the reciter of the Pātimokkha was to say, "Which of the Venerable Ones is to hold Exhortation to the almswomen?" If then one such were discovered, possessed of the eight qualifications, the Chapter of Almswomen must go to him.

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[1] V., iv., p. 56.

[2] CV., x., 9, 4.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*

This seems to have been simply a regularisation of the conduct expressed in the impetuous rush of the almswomen to the Chapter of Almsmen. The point gained was that all haphazard commingling of the two Chapters, in which the less serious-minded almswomen had chances to get the less serious-minded almsmen to give them the Exhortation, was prevented by a more decorous plan, in which there figured no loophole for meeting special friends in the other Chapter.

To sum up the vicissitudes of the arrangements connected with the methods to be used by the almswomen to obtain the Exhortation:

(1) Decreed that an almswoman should go to the Chapter of Almsmen to ask at what time an almsman will come to give the Exhortation.

(2) Almsmen not allowed to come to the almswomen's quarters for the sake of giving the Exhorta-

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[1] CV., x., 9, 4.

tion; but the almswomen to go to them to receive it from an authorised almsman.

(3) Failure of the almswomen to go to the Exhortation.

(4) The whole Chapter of Almswomen went to the Exhortation together.

(5) Ordained that four or five almswomen should go together.

(6) Ordained that two or three almswomen should go together to make a formal appointment for the whole of the Chapter of Almswomen to go to some one properly appointed almsman to receive the Exhortation from him.

(iv.) Almsmen muſt not give the Exhortation to the almswomen for the sake of material gain (*āmisahetu*);[1] that is, the almswomen might not supply their teachers with robes, food, medicine and bedding. This has the appearance of a rule designed to curb the greediness of the almsmen.

Almswomen could be inhibited from the Exhortation. As it appears in the unexcited tones of the Vinaya, this was the punishment laid upon them for refusing to accept the prohibition to enter a Vihāra.[2] Then queſtions arose as to whether it was lawful to hold the Uposatha Ceremony with a woman who had been inhibited from the Exhortation.[3] The decision said to have been given by Gotama was that this was not to be done until her case had been settled. This gave rise to further defining of the rules, for it is said that Udāyi, after having inhibited an almswoman from the Exhortation, went away on a journey.[4] As a result of the complaints that this conduct elicited from the almswomen, almsmen were forbidden to do this, on pain of committing a dukkata offence, apparently because the almswoman's case might be settled, only to be met by the information that the proper person to remove the inhibition was absent. The situation would have been as awkward as that of a hypnotist's leaving his patient in a state of hypnosis. Foolish almsmen were not to inhibit them, grounds must be given for their inhibition, and a decision of the case made.[1]

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[1] V., iv., p. 57, and Pāc., xxiv.

[2] CV., x., 9, 1, 2; see above, p. 122.

[3] CV., x., 9, 3.

[4] *Ibid.*

Pre-eminent throughout runs the implicit impossibility of the almswomen's giving the Exhortation to the almswomen, and concomitantly their dependence on the almsmen for holding it. Hence these had by far the graver charges, which to their credit be it said, Gotama made them realise. The almswomen were responsible for nothing, except for going at the right time and in ordered fashion to ask for the Exhortation.

IV. Pavāraṇā.

"After keeping the Rainy Season of Vassa the almswoman is to hold Pavāraṇā (to inquire whether any fault can be laid to her charge) before both Sanghas—as well that of the almsmen as that of the almswomen—with respect to three matters, namely what has been seen, what has been heard and what has been suspected."[2] Apparently the faults imputed to the almswomen were investigated by both the Sanghas, although it is not told on this occasion which body had priority in conducting the ceremony. But it is clear that in the beginning the almswomen could not hold it solely for themselves. Indignation grips us here, rather than disappointment, for we had not dared to hope.

Pavāraṇā was an essay in discipline and a deterrent to unmonastic behaviour. The offences of others could be revealed; and if the rules of discipline were enforced after they had been confessed,[3] no private grudges need be harboured. The scheme was devised to work these off. There are no references to bitter recriminations, and the guilty party probably usually acceded to his charge. Because the life was extremely public and the eyes of the Fourfold Congregation were everywhere, and because the ceremony took place in full assembly where the reports could be corroborated or confounded by the others present, it would have been a bold member who without scruple or conscience would dare to weave an injurious tale or repudiate an offence of which he knew himself to be guilty. That it was stupid for an almsman to hope that his actions might pass unnoticed is clearly brought out by a conversation which Gotama is said to have held with the almsman Bhaddāli.[1] Although the event did not take place at the Pavāraṇā, since Bhaddāli is not being accused but is accusing himself, it serves so well in illustration of this point that it is mentioned here. Gotama is represented as telling him that he did transgress, foolish, misguided and wrong as he was. " You failed, too, to realise that the Lord was in residence at Sāvatthi, and would know that you were not conducting yourself according to the Master's teachings; secondly, that a number of almsmen and of almswomen too were spending the rainy season in the city and would also know it; thirdly, that in the city there were living a number of lay-disciples—both men and women—who would also know it."

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[1] CV., x., 9, 3. [2] CV., x., 1, 4. [3] CV., iv., 7.

In cases brought up at the Pavāraṇā it would have been the knowledge possessed by the other almsmen and almswomen which would have acted as a check upon twisting tales and upon exaggeration. Indeed one of the objects of the Pavāraṇā was the promotion of a life of harmony with one's fellow-members. In this case it was poor logic which prevented the ceremony from being reciprocal:[2] the almsmen did not hold their Pavāraṇā in front of the almswomen, but apart by themselves. This presumed right to keep their affairs private was one of the results of the self-aggrandisement of men; the state of culture attained by many of the almsmen seems to have been almost too low and primitive to have made it possible for them to feel shame at the rehearsal of much of the lewdness of their behaviour, and therefore to have wished, either from a sense of decency or from a desire not to shock the almswomen, to keep these details to themselves.

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[1] Majjhima, i., 437-439.

[2] Almsmen were not allowed to confess to the almswomen, MV., iv., 14, 1.

The story of the almswomen and their Pavāraṇā follows much the same course as the story of them and their Exhortation. They failed to follow the instructions, for it is recorded that they did not hold the Pavāraṇā at all. The good and modest almswomen complained, and failure to hold a Pavāraṇā was made a pācittiya offence.[1] They then held it by themselves and not with the almsmen, and finally with the Chapter of Almsmen and not apart by themselves. They explained that they were unable to find a suitable time for holding the ceremony, which was a lengthy affair, since each almswoman had to ask for inquiry into her offences during the three rainy months. In order to obviate this difficulty Gotama is said to have decreed that "they must hold their own Pavāraṇā one day, and that of the almsmen the next."[2] This was in accordance with the practice which was building itself up, that where there were double ceremonies for the almswomen to attend, they were performed by their own Order first. A learned, venerable and discreet almswoman had then to be appointed to carry the invitation to the Chapter of Almsmen, and her name proposed to the Assembly. Approval was shown by silence, disapproval by speech.[3] The deputed almswoman was then accompanied to the

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[1] V., iv., p. 313-314.

[2] CV., x., 19, 1.

[3] CV., x., 19, 2.

Chapter of Almsmen by the entire Chapter of Almswomen, and three times she invited them to point out any faults the almswomen might have committed in respect to things seen, heard or suspected, which if they perceived they would confess. "Then will they, if they perceive the offence, confess the same."[1] This clause seems clearly to evince a definite standpoint, resulting from a well-considered attitude. They were steady in their refusal to be hectored by men into admitting the existence of any state which they could not perceive, or for that matter believe, to be true. Truth as an ideal is insisted upon throughout the Buddhist teaching; but truth is many-sided, and the white-hot radiance of the Truth of Insight into Becoming can only shoot to the zenith if it has been unwaveringly and persistently fed by the lesser flames of the Noble Eightfold Way. The way to Truth is as much governed by the Law of Causation as are physical phenomena. It must be taken for granted that these women had by now gleaned from the teachings which they had heard, that right endeavour is fuel for the light that is to break and rend the thick gloom of ignorance;[2] and that it partly consisted in clinging to the truth as to a lamp and a refuge[3] whenever, wherever they were confronted by questions of the true and the false; and that it was an essential element in winning welfare, the goal supreme. The condition that they would confess the fault, if they perceived it, was a spirited bid for independence and for maintaining an undeviating allegiance to the truth, as it appeared to them.

This condition further shows that the almswomen did not intend to be either credulous or too submissive as far as they themselves were concerned. They were not going to be hoodwinked into prejudicing their chances of setting up a good karma by telling falsehoods, or into allowing themselves to appear to be worse than they really were. People in the world were talking enough as it was already about the two Orders: no loophole for ungrounded reasons to fill the mouth of public censure must be countenanced, or the Order of Almswomen, on the existence of which each almswoman's personal freedom depended, might have to be disbanded.

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[1] *Ibid.*

[2] Therīgāthā, xxxv., lvii., lxi., lxiv., and *passim*.

[3] Mahāparinirvāna Sutta, ch. ii., § 33.

The Vinaya goes on to say that after a time the almswomen were allowed to receive the confession of a fault from an almswoman, for the same reason as they obtained sanction to recite the Pātimokkha—namely, the abuses imputed by the general public.

V. Manatta Discipline.

"An almswoman who has been guilty of a serious offence is to undergo the Manatta Discipline towards both the Sanghas (Almsmen and Almswomen)."[1]

Again the enforcement of these disciplinary proceedings was altered, for the same reason as the recitation of the Pātimokkha and the confession of a fault; and in the end Gotama allowed almswomen only to carry out disciplinary measures against the almswomen.[2] All these concessions, though accelerated by outside influences, show a growing tendency among the almswomen to be as dissociated as possible in their internal government from the Chapter of Almsmen. The situation is somewhat ironical. The almswomen left the world because it shackled their freedom, and having joined the shaveling monk always secured greater freedom, and more obligations and rights in their unworldly sphere as a result of the criticism levelled at them by the world.

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[1] CV., x., 1, 4. The nature of the Manatta Discipline is unknown.

[2] CV., x., 6, 3.

VI. Upasampadā Initiation.

" When an almswoman as a novice has been trained for two years in the Six Rules, she is to ask leave for the Upasampadā Initiation from both the Sanghas (as well that of the Almsmen as that of the Almswomen)."[1]

This rule was in imitation of that prescribed for men candidates. There seem however to have been ten precepts for the male novices[2] as against the six for the female novices. It is apparent throughout that women had fewer rights and duties than men.

The acceptance of the Eight Chief Rules by Mahāpajāpatī the Gotamī counted as her initiation. Although this formed an exception to the rule that " Almswomen are to be initiated by almsmen," Gotama stood by his decree which privileged members of the Sākyan clan to dispense with the pabbajjā ceremony[3] (and *ipso facto* with the two years' noviciateship), when later Mahāpajāpatī's followers became anxious as they realised that initiation in the prescribed way had not been accomplished for any of them.[4]

In the ordinary way entrants had to pass the pabbajjā ceremony. Before they could apply for full ordination they had to have spent two years in being trained in the Six Rules (*chasu dhammesu*). These included the five *sīlas*, those precepts which are at the heart of Buddhist morality; while the addition of the sixth, abstention from eating at the wrong times, narrowed that morality to within monastic limits. Anyone who had preserved these rules unbroken and untainted for the two years was then eligible for application for full membership.

The history of the rule for the conferring of the Upasampadā initiation upon almswomen and of the difficulties which had to be faced before the ceremony finally became suitably adjusted appears confused at first, but on closer study an orderly sequence of events is found to emerge.

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[1] CV., x., 1, 4.

[2] MV., i., 56.

[3] MV., i., 38.

[4] CV., x., 2.

Full membership, like restoration after suspension, could only be granted by the sanction of the whole Chapter. Various items contributed to the making of this rule. In the first place for two Vassas (that is, for two years) the almswomen had ordained probationers (*sikkhamānā*) who had not been trained with regard to the Six Rules. The rule was then formulated that if a probationer asked for ordination and had kept the Six Rules for two Vassas, ordination might be conferred upon her.[1] But no almswoman might ordain a probationer who had not been trained in the training, or who had broken any of the Six Rules. It is again laid down here that she must be a probationer for two years, and that she must be tested in those Six Rules.

It then appears that some almswomen ordained a probationer who had been trained for the two years and tested in those Six Rules.[2] But apparently the other almswomen did not hear of this, for they are reported to have said to them, "Come, probationers, learn this, give that, fetch that, that is wanted, and do all that is suitable as from a junior to a senior." The newly ordained protested and declared that they were no longer probationers, but almswomen who had undergone the two years' training. It was then stated that a pācittiya offence was incurred if an almswoman ordained a probationer who had had the two years' training, unless she obtained the authorisation (*sammata*) of the Chapter. Ordination had to be by the sanction of the whole Chapter, and not by a selection chosen from it,[3] for this would have opened the door to securing a "packed jury." This amendment to the rule was said to have been brought about by the conduct of Thullanandā. Thinking that she would ordain a novice she assembled the senior almsmen, and having provided them with ample food of both sorts (hard and soft), she dismissed them, collected four of doubtful character, including Devadatta, and then ordained the probationer. The virtuous almswomen complained, hence the amendment, to which was attached vital importance, for it made the rule clear and definite.

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[1] V., iv., p. 318.

[2] V., iv., p. 320.

[3] V., iv., p. 335.

The tendency here, as in the regularisation of the Exhortation Ceremony, was to keep the monk-world combined and orderly; to discourage favouritism; to prevent any section from becoming dominant or troublesome; and to deter the growth of factions.

At the ordination ceremony the almswoman seeking initiation had to answer to twenty-six questions; these included twenty-four as to Disqualifications, the presence of any of which would make it impossible for her to receive the initiation,[1] and two others. The twenty-four Disqualifications which were inquired into were eleven gynæcological deformities, five diseases and eight other matters. Unsatisfactory answers meant that candidature could not yet be suggested.

In the beginning the almsmen questioned the almswomen as to the Disqualifications. The women were so greatly disconcerted that they were incapable of answering. Gotama, ever sympathetic and wise, on hearing of this difficulty, decreed "that initiation is to be conferred in the Chapter of Almsmen upon an almswoman who had been initiated on the one side in the Chapter of Almswomen."[2] But a fresh difficulty arose because the almswomen who attempted to put the questions had no idea what answers those requiring initiation should give; so the almsmen had again to step into the breach and to tell those perplexed women candidates how to answer. Unfortunately in the blundering way of men they began to do this in the full Assembly, which naturally upset the poor little almswomen so much that they still could give no answers. The almsmen reported this to Gotama who, instead of openly rebuking them for their tactlessness, said that the almswomen must be instructed aside, and explained the manner of the instruction to be given.

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[1] CV., x., 17, 1.

[2] CV., x., 17, 2.

The first point which he is said to have made was that the almswomen seeking initiation should come to an instructor;[1] secondly, that the instructor should not be unlearned or incompetent, but someone who had been properly appointed. The notion underlying these rulings appears to have been twofold. First, that a probationer might receive useful help from a well-qualified woman during her two year's noviciateship. Secondly, that the promise made by a senior to a junior to ordain her, if there were no obstacle in the way,[2] might be enforced. The hope appears to have been that by making the senior responsible to the Sangha, she *ipso facto* would become thoroughly reliable. At least she would know that her failure was punishable. Two cases of flagrant injustice led to the formulation of these rulings. A trait, characteristic of the Indian mind, even to-day, is apparent in the first case:[2] nothing was said of the censurable nature of what amounted to a bribe in an Elder's saying to a novice, "If you will give me your cloak I will ordain you." All the interest centred in the Elder's failure, having made this promise, to keep her word—an omission also blameworthy by Western standards. In the second case mentioned[3] as contributory to the formulation of these rulings the Elder, again the rebellious almswoman called Thullanandā,[1] is said to have suggested to a probationer that if she would follow her and minister to her for two years, she would ordain her. But when the time came she failed to keep her pledge; for she neither carried it out herself, nor saw that it was done by someone else.

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[1] The name of the instructor is the last of the questions put at the Upasampadā Ceremony. On the occasion when Gotama was prescribing the questions the word used was *pavattinī*, a female instructor. Referring to the almsmen the word used is *upajjhāya*. This is the only occasion, when Gotama was still trying to get matters into order, that the masculine word is used in connection with the almswomen. It is to be expected from the context.

[2] V., iv., p. 332.

[3] V., iv., p. 333.

The instructor might be self-appointed or appointed by another, and rules for these appointments were declared. In either case the sanction of the Sangha had to be obtained. The almswoman appointed instructor had then to go to the novice who was seeking initiation and tell her how to answer the questions; she proceeded to put them to her as a rehearsal. When the instruction was over the instructor and the candidate were not to return to the Assembly together,[2] presumably so that the instructor might put forward her candidate's case in her absence, lest there should be any disappointing objection to her acceptance. When the candidate arrived she was to assume a reverential attitude, and ask three times for the initiation whereby she hoped to be raised "up out of the worldly life." Then a learned and competent almswoman had to question her regarding the Disqualifications, and another had to propose three times that she should be received. Silence, as usual, meant consent. So far the proceedings were substantially the same as those obtaining for the almsmen candidates. But for the almswomen the Ceremony did not end here, for when initiation into the Chapter of Almswomen was over the candidate had to go on to the Chapter of Almsmen, there to endure an exact repetition of the whole business.

There is on record the case of an almswoman who received the Upasampadā by a messenger, not going in person to the Chapter of Almswomen. Her name was Aḍḍhakāsī.[1] She had been a courtesan until she adopted the religious life under the almswomen. When she felt ready for seniority she was anxious to go to Sāvatthi to receive it from the Blessed One himself, by him to be constituted a full member of the Order. But men of abandoned life got wind of the proposal and beset the road and she was afraid to go. Gotama's treatment of her case is another example of the pains which he took for the sake of individual men and women. But it was only after the almsmen had made many abortive efforts he was able to make them understand that they must confer the Upasampadā initiation by sending a learned and competent almswoman as a messenger to Aḍḍhakāsī. In this way a precedent was created and women obtained the right to confer initiation in exceptional cases. It was a gain, even if a slight one. It is regrettable, however, that the manner of dealing with the exceptions never became the rule. It is clear that the almsmen were determined fully to maintain their share in the initiation of the almswomen.

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[1] It is possible that this was a name invented, for handing down, for different delinquents, so as to shield each of them from undesirable immortality; *cf.* the similar case of the ***chabbaggiya*** (or six-clique) almsmen and the ***chabbaggiya*** almswomen.

[2] CV., x., 17, 5.

From the documentary evidence which we possess, it does not appear that an almsman ever blackballed a woman candidate who had been passed by the Chapter of Almswomen. Indeed scrupulous care in wielding their responsibilities and a restrained and restraining control must have been exercised by the almswomen. They would not have wished to wound the sensibilities and dignity of the almsmen, or to have laid themselves open to rebuke by proffering ill-prepared or unsuitable candidates. The pioneers of the movement would have felt constrained never to overstep expectations, but to nominate only of their very best and steadiest.

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[1] CV., x., 22 and Therīgāthā, xxii.; MV., viii., 2, note 3. Apparently as opposed to *kāsi*, worth a thousand kāsiyas (*i.e.*, of the Benares monetary standard); or it may mean worth half Benares. See below, p. 184.

If the final decision of allowing a candidate to become a senior rested with the almsmen, the preliminary and formative stages were entrusted to the almswomen. Theirs was the power of acceptance or rejection, and in them was vested, equally with the men, the knowledge of the qualifications necessary for following the higher path. It was an investiture more far-reaching than appears at first sight, for many of those admitted as Elders evidently went a long way searching on the Path; some found the goal, arahanship, which they hymned in glowing words in the poignantly beautiful Therīgāthā.

The Upasampadā initiation was a matter of very deep seriousness and momentous importance, since it meant quitting the noviciateship and registering as a senior; shouldering the extra duties of teaching and instruction; and thenceforth devoting a greater application to the exercise of meditation. A large part of the daily work consisted of contemplation. This became severer in type the higher the member rose in the Order. Teaching too made heavy demands, for not only had the novices to be instructed[1] and prepared, but as Takakusu points out[2] the entrants to full membership were not free from supervision, but continued under the moral and disciplinary guidance of two Elders chosen by the initiate. No doubt it was their business to further their pupils on the Path, so that they might purge away all appetite, remove all spitefulness from their life, all torpor, all worry and misgivings and then " dwell in the First Ecstasy, and successively in the Second, Third and Fourth Ecstasies."[3] It is said that an almswoman tried for seven years to learn the Vinaya from Uppalavaṇṇā. But as she failed to grasp it, Gotama is reported to have decreed that almsmen could teach the Vinaya to almswomen;[1] not instead of them, but in addition to them. Even though remaining in *statu pupillari* to the Elders the step from noviciateship to seniority was a most important *rite de passage*, marking a definite change in the life of the almsman or almswoman.

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[1] See above, p. 141; and below, p. 247 ff.

[2] Takakusu, art. Initiation, E.R.E.

[3] Majjhima, iii., 4.

Hence it is not surprising that the training given before the change was made, and the examination held before it was consummated were of a searchingly keen nature.

If the life of an almswoman were to be rigorous as compared with that of a laywoman; if she were to be and to remain healthy; if she were to be self-reliant and spiritually competent; if she were to cast no longing backward glances at the world which she had left; and if she were to be disengaged from all the claims which it might have had over her—the examination leading to the admission would necessarily be hard and comprehensive, and the training[2] leading to the examination would be long and arduous and arranged so as to give a foretaste of the heavier demands to follow.

In the examination, after the sixteen questions regarding deformities and diseases[3] (leprosy, boils, dry leprosy,[4] consumption and fits[4]) had been answered the almswomen candidates had to answer the following ten questions:

(1) Are you a human being? This question appears to have been asked simply on account of rather a silly story of a serpent who entered the monastic life in the form of a man; but one night in forgetting to keep up his disguise the whole vihāra

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[1] CV., x., 8, 1.

[2] Some account of the training is given below. See below, p. 247 ff.

[3] Unlike Medieval English nunneries, where deformed and defective girls were often placed. Power, *Medieval English Nunneries*, p. 31 ff.

[4] Translated by Takakusu, art. Initiation, E.R.E., as eczema and epilepsy.

became filled to overflowing with his form while he slept. The superstition of animals assuming human form dies hard, but it is all the more curious in this connection since Gotama was in revolt against the superstitions of his day. The question is also nonsensical, for non-human beings would have been prevented from passing the pabbajjā.

(2) Are you a female? This was possibly asked to insure against the admission of eunuchs.

(3) Are you a free woman?[1] Slaves were not admitted to the Order,[2] that is to say they were not even eligible for the pabbajjā ordination. As Rhys Davids points out,[3] although slaves might be admitted into some of the Orders coexistent with the Sākyaputtas, as the followers of Gotama were not infrequently called, Gotama restricted this custom, so that "whenever slaves were admitted to the Order they must have previously obtained the consent of their masters, and also, I think, have been emancipated." This is borne out by the story of the jealous woman who mutilated her female servant.[4] When the outrage was brought to light and the woman and her husband had been reprimanded by Gotama, they were converted to the faith, and then and there they freed the female slave and made her a follower of the Dhamma. A comparison might be made here with the other meaning of "free from debts" (*bhujissa*) as it occurs, for example, in the Therīgāthā,

> "Freed woman she, discharged is all her debt,
> A Bhikkhunī trained in the higher sense.
> All sundered are the bonds, her task is done,
> And the great drugs that poisoned her are purged."[5]

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[1] According to the Bhikkhunīvibhanga Cmy. on V., iv., p. 224, there were three kinds of slaves: those who were born slaves (*antojāto*), those who were bought for money (*dhanakkīto*), and those who on the field of battle were spared from slavery (*karamarānīto*).

[2] MV., i., 47.

[3] Dialogues, vol. i., p. 103.

[4] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 314.

[5] Therīgāthā, verse 364.

(4) Are you free from debts ?[1] In the Dialogues[2] a comparison is drawn between an almsman who is content and a layman who has been successful in business. The layman says " I used to have to carry on my business by getting into debt, but it has gone so well with me that I have paid off what I owed." A good almsman would get rid of the entanglement of sense desires; on the credit side he would develop earnestness and the power to direct his efforts and energies in a continual unflinching loyalty to the very best. It does not seem that this interpretation of getting free from debts, which might well be the *result* of entering the Order and undergoing the training, is the meaning intended in the question. It would be putting the cart before the horse. It seems more probable that the question would have been asked as a means of ascertaining whether there was anybody belonging to the laity who had a legitimate claim over the money of the candidate for admission.

Again, it is possible that this question should be interpreted in quite another way. It may mean " Are you an Indian ?", not a foreigner. If this were so it would be in accordance with the " regional views " of the times, and would probably have an interesting history behind it.

(5) Are you in the King's service ? (translated by Takakusu[3] " are you exempt from military service ?"). If the meaning be taken in the narrower sense suggested by Takakusu, it is easy enough to see the force of the question when asked of men candidates. Owing to the prohibition on taking life (the second of the sīlas) it is logical to expect that anyone who put himself in the way of doing so was not regarded as capable of treading on the higher paths to Salvation. Therefore, taking this as a largely contributory reason,

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[1] MV., i., 46.

[2] Dialogues, vol. i., p. 82 ff. and *cf.* Majjhima, i., 275.

[3] Art. Initiation, E.R.E.

Gotama is said to have forbidden anyone who was in the royal service to receive the pabbajjā ordination, giving entry to the Order.[1]

But it is difficult to see the force of the meaning of the question in Takakusu's translation as put to almswomen, for nowhere in India does it appear that women took part in military service. Of the ten kinds of wives spoken of in the Vinaya, one is said to be a "flag-brought,"[2] that is, saved from being slain in war. But because these were prisoners of war, it does not follow that they had been taking part in the fighting. It must therefore be concluded, either that the service of royalty in whatever capacity was looked upon both as binding for the servitor, and also as totally unfitting him for the monastic life; or that the questions put to the almswomen were carelessly and thoughtlessly modelled on those put to the almsmen. This alternative appears to me to be unacceptable, for even allowing for the possibility of errors creeping in with time, Gotama throughout his treatment of the almswomen appears to show nothing but the greatest consideration for them, and invariably brought an attentive scrutiny to bear upon their concerns.

Hence the former alternative appears the more acceptable. In spirit it is kindred to the prevalent contemporary outlook: that as slaves and debtors are in some way bound to the world, because they or their money belong to other people, in the same way those in the royal service belong to the king, and are his inalienable property. "Do not take what is not given to you" is a major law of Buddhist morality. This point of view is further corroborated by Gotama's reputed saying, "I prescribe that you obey kings."[3] He either could not or would not get rid of his early reverence for the royal personage; could not on account of his lineage, and would not on account of the benefits which might accrue to the Order by the adherence of kings: and kings do not like having their slaves filched from them.

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[1] MV., i., 40. 4.

[2] V., iii., p. 139.

[3] MV., iii., 4, 3.

(6) Have your father and mother given their consent? Permission of both parents was required before a man or a woman made such a drastic severance from the household life as entry into the Order entailed.[1] Although the ruling arose early in the history of the Order, after Suddhodana had lost both his sons, Nanda and Rāhula, into the Order, the same sanction was required for women candidates. Suddhodana came in such great distress to Gotama, that he made the rule, too late to help Suddhodana, but not too late to prevent the discomfiture of subsequent parents: "Let no son, almsmen, receive the pabbajjā ordination without his father's and his mother's consent. He who confers the pabbajjā ordination (on a son without that permission) is guilty of a dukkata offence."[2]

It is difficult to know how much importance the Sangha attached to the necessity for a wife to secure her husband's consent for admission. If the husband's permission had appeared to be as important as the parents', doubtless a question on this point would have been put to the entrants. There certainly came to be the ruling that it constituted a pācittiya offence for an almswoman to ordain a girl who had not the consent of her parents or husband.[3] The preliminary step of gaining the husband's permission appears, so far as the records go, to have been taken by the majority of the married applicants. Mention is frequently made of women who either tried and succeeded or who tried and failed to gain their husbands' permission. Wives are never represented as announcing to their husbands, as the husbands sometimes did to them, that they were about to renounce the world, and they seldom slipped surreptitiously away. Hence as no question was put by the Sangha on this matter, it is probable that the husband's consent was rooted in domestic obligations and social convention rather than in religious sanction.

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[1] MV., i., 54, and several of the Thera-therī-gāthā.

[2] MV., i., 54, 5.

[3] V., iv., p. 334. At the present time at the Kandy convent single women must have permission from their parents; a wife must have the consent of her husband; a widow is free to come in, but the approval of her family is sought.

This is borne out by a Jātaka story.[1] A saintly woman is said to have had a husband who used to enjoy himself elsewhere. She invited the two Chief Disciples to her house and listened to the teaching. Thinking that her husband did not want her and that there was no need for her to remain in the household, she decided to embrace the religious life. For this end, it is said that she informed her parents, and obtained their permission. It is not said that she told her unfaithful husband, for she no longer regarded herself as his possession.

(7) Are you full twenty years of age ?[2] That is older than the normal marriageable age. It was thought desirable that girls should have come to years of discretion before they were ordained. For if they entered the Order while still quite children both the physical hardships and the mental strain of a life dedicated to religion would be too great for them and in their fragile youth they would fail and succumb. In drawing up six pācittiya rules to prevent any such contingency, Gotama probably had in mind both the welfare of the individual and the safeguarding of the Order; for it would have gained nothing but discredit and hatred, had it stained its reputation by wrecking the health of half-grown children. The sixty-fifth and sixty-sixth Bhikkhunī Pācittiyas[3] result respectively

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[1] Jātaka, 234.

[2] An informant from Ceylon tells me that at the present day the convent at Kandy makes it a rule to admit no woman under forty years of age.

[3] V., iv., pp. 321, 322.

from the cases of two little brides, one under twelve years old and the other having completed her twelfth year, who were ordained by the almswomen; and the seventy-fourth and seventy-fifth Bhikkhunī Pācittiyas[1] result respectively from the cases of two little unmarried girls, one under twelve years and the other having completed her twelfth year, who were ordained by the almswomen. In both pairs of cases it is stated that young children are unable to endure the heat and the cold, the discomfort caused by biting animals and creeping things; that they are unable to grasp the doctrines which are difficult to explain; and that bodily pains are hard and bitter for them. What a sidelight is thrown on the life of a woman bound to poverty ![2] But this is not all, for it is said that those who are less than twenty years of age and those who have completed their twentieth year if they are of gentle birth are not fitted for such an austere life.[3]

It is evident that Gotama was not set on the mere number of recruits who might be willing to fill the Order; rather than hoping to get them young, he looked to their qualities and stamina before considering the question of their admission.

Further, the candidate seeking ordination should have come to years of discretion as a kind of guarantee that she entered of her own considered choice. Had she entered at a more tender age, it might have turned out that her real vocation lay not in the direction of religion at all. Then it would be hopeless to have tried to make a good almswoman of her, and she would have been nothing but a trial to the Order. Or again, had she been pushed into the Order by parents unwilling to support her, she was likely to have been tormented by nagging doubts, or by a constant pull back towards the world.[1]

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[1] V., iv., pp. 329, 330.

[2] *Cf.* below, p. 198. The life was considered hard for men as well as for women.

[3] V., iv., pp. 327, 329.

(8) Are you duly provided with robes and almsbowl?[2] The symbols of a homeless state. Entrants took no dowry with them and presented no money to the Order on entering it: no entrance fee was demanded or expected of them.[3]

(9) What is your name? It became commoner later for entrants to change their name after having been admitted.[4]

(10) What is the name of your proposer? Probably the intention of this question was to ascertain whether she was one who had been approved by the Council.

No entrant was asked to give any reasons for wishing to join, and there were no questions as to the kind or amount of education, religious or secular, that the entrant had hitherto received,[5] and no inquiries as to the manner in which she had hitherto spent her life. These points presumably would be covered by the training in the Six Rules during her two probationary years before she asked for full Ordination. If she could answer the twenty-six questions in a satisfactory way the only other hindrances which there appear to have been to her admission were covered by two precautionary rulings. The first of these was to render novices of undesirable character ineligible for application for admission: those who kept company and were disorderly in their habit or speech with men or boys,[1] those who were ill-tempered and those who caused grief in others.[2] These were obviously unsuited to lead the monastic life and religion was not their true vocation. Thullanandā is depicted as ordaining Caṇḍakālī, a novice characterised by all these attributes, all of them calculated to threaten the internal peace of the Order. The second precautionary ruling was designed to prevent women in a certain state from applying for full membership; namely pregnant women[3] and women giving suck[4] (that is, a mother or a nurse, according to the Old Commentary). The life of the young for whom they were responsible would certainly rank as a tie, a chain to the world, and could not be countenanced in a life whose aim it was to be composed of members who were freed of human and worldly bondage.

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[1] *Cf.* The Order of Gilbert of Sempringham, when at the age of twenty the alternative was put to the novice of joining the nuns or lay-sisters (Eckenstein, *Woman under Monasticism*, p. 217). See also Power, *Med. Eng. Nunneries*, p. 25: "The age of profession was sixteen, but much younger children were received as novices."

[2] To-day in Ceylon they carry their begging bowls slung across their shoulders as the monks do.

[3] *Cf.* Power, *Med. Eng. Nunneries*, p. 14: "The dower which, in spite of the strict prohibition of the rule, was certainly required from a novice in almost every convent." *Cf.* p. 18 ff.

[4] C. A. F. Rhys Davids, *Gotama the Man*, p. 152.

[5] Power, *Med. Eng. Nunneries*, p. 13: "A certain degree of education was demanded in a nun before her admission." It is said that in order to be admitted to the Kandy convent literacy is expected, but exceptions are made, as oral instruction is abundant. Another informant tells me that few of the nuns (*upasīkas*) at the Colombo convent are at all educated; only one or two know even a little Pāli, and there are no means by which they can learn anything, for they are not allowed to go to the temples and learn from the priests (monks).

At the end of the whole Upasampadā Ceremony the almsmen must "measure the shadow" cast by the sun, and tell the season, date and time to the newly received almswoman, and "tell her the whole formula."[1] The translators of the Cullavagga think, and refer to Buddhaghosa,[2] that all the data specified should be repeated to her, so that "she might be able to give a correct answer about her spiritual age," even if she were hazy about her actual age. Such women positively enlarged the numerical distribution of the religion and the moral code which it supported; they had the potential power to increase their own fervour and that of others, and to gain their own release, and by instruction to help others to gain theirs. This is no small contribution to the religion that they embraced.

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[1] *Purisa*, one who has attained to twenty years; *kumāraka*, one who has not attained to twenty years, according to the Old Cmy., V., iv., p. 334.

[2] V., iv., p. 333. *Cf.* Rule of St. Benedict, given by Cranage, *The Home of the Monk*, p. 3: "At Earnwell enquiry was made as to his [the man candidate's] country, parentage, health, knowledge, behaviour, voice, and power of singing, capacity for writing or of executing any mechanical art; whether he was in debt or had contracted other obligations; whether he was good-tempered, sociable, trustworthy and of a good character."

[3] V., iv., p. 317; *cf.* Paumavaī, the Jain Queen who renounced the world: "And although she was asked at her consecration she did not tell of her pregnancy for fear that they might not grant her ordination." Meyer, *Hindu Tales*, London, 1909, p. 127.

[4] V., iv., p. 318.

After the almsmen had recounted to the "newly raised up" almswoman all the facts relating to her spiritual birth, they were to say to the other almswomen, "You are to teach her what are the three things allowed (*nissayas*)[3] and what are the eight things interdicted (*aṭṭha akaraṇīyāni*)."[4] Almsmen upon whom the Upasampadā Ordination had been conferred were allowed four resources or necessaries (*nissayas*): morsels of food given in alms (*piṇḍiyālopabhojana*), a robe made of rags taken from the dust-heap (*paṃsukulacīvara*), dwelling at the foot of a tree (*rukkhamūlasenāsana*), and decomposing urine as a medicine (*pūtimuttabhesajja*). The resource (*nissaya*) not allowed to the almswomen was the dwelling at the foot of a tree. It is not, however, mentioned here: merely omitted from the enumeration. Probably Gotama realised the undesirability of a solitary forest life for women, knowing full well that obvious dangers were to be expected from men of loose life lurking about, and also, presumably, although never mentioned, from wild animals.

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[1] CV., x., 17, 8.

[2] MV., i., 77, note.

[3] MV., i., 30, 1; *cf.* the four requisites (*paccaya*) used by the almspeople in general, *piṇḍapāta* (alms), *cīvara* (robes), *senāsana* (a dwelling-place), and *bhesajja* (medicine). Possibly the *nissayas* were observed only by the stricter almspeople.

[4] *Cf.* MV., i., 78.

It is probable that the definite prohibition of the use of the third resource for the almswomen was made as the result of a certain event which occurred later. For it is recorded that men of abandoned life violated some almswomen who were dwelling in the forest.[1] This emergency and the following interdiction would be in accordance with the usual way in which the rules came to be made: never solely on account of an hypothetical occurrence, but always as the result of some particular one.

The presence of this danger and the need of guarding against it is further emphasised in the story of the rape of Uppalavaṇṇā.[2] "At that time it was not forbidden almswomen to dwell in the forest." She entered a dark forest, had a hut built, a bed set up in it, and curtains hung around. But one day a young kinsman of hers, who had been in love with her before she joined the Order, hearing that she was gone to Sāvatthi for alms, entered the forest, found the hut and hid under the bed. On her return he overpowered her and worked his will on her and went away. "The almswoman told the other almswomen what had happened, the almswomen told the almsmen and the almsmen told the Blessed One."[3] The case naturally gave rise to a great deal of discussion within the Order, and Uppalavaṇṇā was commended in verses uttered by the Blessed One for not clinging to the pleasures of the senses. But because it could not be guaranteed that all the almswomen had rid themselves of the Cankers so completely as she had, and because of other possible awkward results, the matter called for serious consideration. Therefore the Teacher summoned King Pasēnadi of Kosala and said to him: "Your Majesty, in this religion young women of family, as well as young men of family, renounce many kinsfolk, and much wealth, and retire from the world, and take up residence in the forest. In case women reside in the forest, it is possible that evil-minded men inflamed by lust may conduct themselves towards them with disrespect and arrogance, do them violence and bring their religious life to naught. Therefore a place of residence for the Community of Almswomen should be erected within the City." The King agreed to this and had a place of residence built for the Community of Almswomen on one side of the City. "From that time the almswomen resided only within the City." This was exceptional, for the residence was usually just outside the City walls. That it was actually built inside here at Sāvatthi is confirmed by two pieces of evidence, the one archæological and the other documentary. The findings of the recent excavations at Sāvatthi revealed the Vihāra, known as the Jetavana, inside the City walls; and in the literature the almswomen are incidentally portrayed as bringing raw wheat for their food from the fields, through the toll at the City entrance, into their Vihāra at Sāvatthi.[1]

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[1] CV., x., 23.

[2] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 401, and *cf.* Uppalavaṇṇā, Therīgāthā, lxiv. Possibly not the same.

[3] This is the usual way in which it is recorded that reports reached the Founder. With the exception of Mahāpajāpatī, see below, p. 308 ff., the almswomen are never represented as themselves going straight to him.

The instructions not to go about singly were respected, as is illustrated by an event in the life of Dhammadinnā.[2] Shortly after she was admitted to the Order, she asked her teachers if she might go into retreat, saying "I would go into a village abode." She went, but she went accompanied, for it is said that she returned with her almswomen. If she had been an almsman she would almost certainly have been allowed to go into the forest or into the village alone.[1]

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[1] V., iv., p. 264.

[2] Therīgāthā, xii.

Precautions such as these were necessary for the safety of the weaker sex. But otherwise there is never any hint or suggestion that woman was too frail to run the gauntlet of the world's attractions and temptations, or that the purity of her reputation could only be preserved if she were not allowed to go out of the Vihāra precincts. No special treatment was accorded to the women on the score of their being less able than the men to control and restrain themselves. The important thing was not to run away, but to square up in the open, where one's services were needed. Hence claustration never became a part of the Buddhist religious organisation, and the fret and fury that it may create were unknown to the almswomen.

The four Interdictions for the almsmen[2] were abstention from (literally, taking no pleasure in, *paṭivirato*, *veramaṇī*[3]) sexual intercourse, abstention from taking what is not given and from theft, from destroying the life of any living being, and from attributing to themselves any superhuman condition. The punishment for failure to conform to any of these was expulsion from the Order. The member was said to have "fallen into defeat" and to be no longer "in communion."[4]

The eight things interdicted (*aṭṭha akaraṇīyāni*) for the almswomen are nowhere enumerated, for there is no Commentary for this part of the Vinaya. Possibly they are the reverse of the Eight Chief Rules. The almswomen should be told to abstain from them "as long as your life lasts."[1] Since there are a number of recorded cases of members who left the Order, this, strictly speaking, means not "for life," but for life while a member of the Order.

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[1] *Cf.* Power, *Medieval People*, p. 80 ff. Nuns were not allowed to go out alone.

[2] MV., i., 78, 2-5.

[3] C. A. F. Rhys Davids, "Buddhism and the Negative," *J.P.T.S.*, 1924-27, p. 1.

[4] Pārājika Dhamma, 1-4, Vinaya Translation, vol. i., where note 1 explains that if he "declares his weakness" and acknowledges himself unfit for the discipline he may obtain permission to "throw off the robes."

VII. Abuse of Almsmen.

"An almswoman is on no pretext to revile or abuse an almsman."[2] This is the same as the fifty-second Bhikkhunī Pācittiya,[3] which was apparently formulated when the six almswomen (*chabbaggiya bhikkhuniyo*) discovered that Upāli had revealed to Kappitaka, his teacher (who had wantonly broken up a stupa they had just erected to a great almswoman, recently dead), their plot to kill him. They upbraided and abused Upāli; and after the news of this conduct had come to the ears of Gotama, as it is reported in the stereotyped way to have done, it was made into a pācittiya offence for almswomen to abuse almsmen. Upāli later became an eminent man in the Order, but he was only a pupil at the time that the rule was said to have been made. It is possible that it was really formulated later, when he had become famous. Kappitaka's indecent and selfish behaviour is symptomatic of the extremely low state to which monkdom could fall at that time. The complaints of the modest almswomen (*bhikkhuniyo appicchā*) of the angry retaliation of the shocked ones, and their absence of sympathy with the horror felt by these at the dishonour done to their dead, show how important they felt it to be not to incense and annoy the almsmen. Possibly they were nervous, thinking that their own Order still existed only on sufferance, and feared that the tirades of a riotous sect, whatever the cause, would tend to endanger its safety.

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[1] CV., x., 17, 8; *cf.* MV., i., 78, 2-5.

[2] CV., x., 1, 4.

[3] V., iv., pp. 308, 309.

The only occasion when it was said not to be an offence for an almswoman to upbraid an almsman was if he talked against the Dhamma and the teaching. This seventh of the Eight Chief Rules is similar to the third of the Pācittiya Rules for the almsmen, "there is pācittiya in the slander of an almsman."[1] But the almsmen are never definitely told that they must not talk disrespectfully to an almswoman.[2]

A sidelight throws a high light on certain relations between the laity and the Order,[3] and suggests that the whole Order, not merely the almswomen, was still on sufferance and dependent for its continuity on the goodwill of the laity. In one respect at least the lay-women held the whip hand over the almsmen, and again the radical distinction between world and cloister looms larger than the distinction between sex. It cannot be believed that it was solely on account of Visākhā's eminence as a lay-disciple that she is said to have rebuked Udāyi, the almsman, for behaviour that would not redound to the credit of the Dhamma. It was rather that she belonged to the laity that she was able, unlike the almswomen, to take the cream of her position, criticise the conduct of the almsmen, and reprimand them without herself incurring any blame.

VIII. Admonition.

"From henceforth official admonition by almswomen of almsmen is forbidden, whereas the official admonition of almswomen by almsmen is not forbidden."[4]

This last rule is another instance of the placing of the women in a position of definite inferiority to the men, and of a refusal to grant them independence to manage their own Order, with the power to ratify their own proceedings. That they were permitted to enter the Order at all, and were not precluded from full membership, were doubtless concomitants of the times in which they lived. Although preceding epochs had been slightly relieved by the cult of the mother, they were otherwise depressingly uniform in their branding of women as inferior to men, never to be considered as anything but as a man's property. Even with the improvement in their status under Buddhism, still young when these rules were formulated so far as the records indicate, to permit women complete equality and complete independence would have been unexpected. We have to look to days even later than our own for that. But the advance made by women was patent and definite. With the exception of the necessity for the wife to gain her husband's consent, they were allowed to enter the Order on the same conditions as the men, and although once in the Order they would find both as individuals and as members of their Chapter that a certain amount of subservience was expected of them by the almsmen, yet the permission granted them to enter the Order at all was a fact of momentous significance.

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[1] V., iv., p. 12.

[2] *Cf.* above, p. 126, where the presence of an abuser of the almswomen is given as a ground for suspending the recitation of the Pātimokkha.

[3] V., iii., pp. 187-191.

[4] CV., x., 1, 4.

The almswomen who lived during Gotama's lifetime may be sorted into three main classes: the pioneers, already discussed; the common herd of good, bad and indifferent women, to be discussed later, whose conduct contributed to the making of all but the Eight Chief Rules (*garudhammā*); and the Therīs (Elders), each of whom is said to have gained arahanship, and to whom the seventy-three verses which have survived are ascribed. These must now come under consideration—first because they were rarer than the great multitude who surrounded them; and secondly, because the immortal words in which their spiritual experiences are set indicate a variety of estimable states that many another almswoman could have had and should have had as her objective, for many were potential *arahans*, had potential worth or holiness, were saints in the making, for whom after this present life there need be no more rebirth. Many no doubt held the ideal fixedly before them, for there are records of other women, besides these special Therīs, who are said to have won arahanship. The difference is that if they put their experiences into words these have not survived.

By understanding something of what these women wanted, and by following some of the circumstances which led them to wear the yellow robe, it will be easier to probe the motives which led others to do likewise, but about whom there is not such full evidence. It will also become easier to understand some of the difficulties which these had to face, the reasons which led to checks and restraints being laid upon them, and hence some of the reasons for their failure or success.

CHAPTER III

THERĪGĀTHĀ. PART I

OF the seventy-three verses or psalms which form the collection known as the Therīgāthā, seventy-one are supposed to have been uttered by individual almswomen, and two are ascribed to two groups of followers of Paṭācārā, all of them contemporaries of Gotama. Mrs. Rhys Davids[1] has discussed the cognate questions of how far a reasonable claim may be made for associating the poetesses to whom the verses are attributed with historical personages, and also of how far the verses should be regarded rather as repositories of memorial utterances, which formed some of the material in common use by several almswomen in their teaching and preaching. The conclusion which she comes to is that, even if the majority of the verses cannot be said to have been written by the women whose names they bear, yet a distinctly individual note rings through each one.

Whether the verses originated from something like spontaneous generation, resistlessly breaking forth from the thankfulness and intense joy of each woman as the glorious truth flashed upon her that her mind was freed (*cittaṃ vimucci me*); or whether they were welded together by editors from customary refrains, the whole collection of verses stands as an undeniable justification, if one is wanted, for the permission granted to women to enter the Order. They present a living evidence of a set purpose inspiring courageous endeavour, of a fineness of achievement in the desired task, and of a synthesis and emergence of personality, which would all have lain dormant or fragmentary if the means of expression had been withheld. Of all the tragedy of waste, waste of personality is not the least melancholy; marked as it is by the failure of adaptation to environment and the failure in adapting the environment to the self. Had Gotama, the physician of minds,[1] prevented women from entering the Order, the world would have been seared and blighted by the presence of many unsatisfied and discontented women, who would have had to go through life, resigned to their misfit or fretting against it, with all the wretchedness that the adoption of either of these courses entails. They would have been subject, year in, year out, to the vexations and the tedium of the daily round, or to the weight of pressing cares, or to the hollowness of the pleasures of the senses; they would have drifted along with no particular centre of reference. But as the verses testify, were they but given the opportunity, they were as capable as men of peeling off the wrappings of the flesh, of ridding themselves of sensuality and craving (*taṇhā*), and of treading on the higher path and gaining the fruits of arahanship. They were capable of expressing the powers that were within them in fields of achievement where functions other than those of the reproductive were called into play. But however wide might be the scope for an intellectual life, yet there was also opportunity for the maternal instinct to fulfil itself in warding and guarding both laywomen and other almswomen. The inspiration of the mother-mind was not withdrawn. The verses, enshrining the results of their spiritual venturings, are a valuable addition to the varieties of religious experience; nearly all of them enrich the history of human thought by witnessing to the triumphant vital will in man and woman to overcome circumstances and difficulties.

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[1] Therīgāthā, Introduction to Translation, p. xvii ff.

The word man, *Homo Sapiens*, includes women as well; one at least of the almswomen, Somā, the reputed author of one of the verses, was convinced of the inherently equal capacity of the sexes to gain arahanship, the nominal goal of all who embraced the religious life. She was so much convinced of it that her verse expresses not individual exaltation at her own attainment, as do the others, but a challenge entered for the cause of her whole sex. She takes a wider view than the other almswomen, in so far as her claim is not comprehension of the Dhamma for herself and by herself, but for all women. Her note is not individualism, atomistic and selfish, but altruistic co-operation, significant of an outlook which transcends that of self as surely as it transcends that of sex. As a verse Somā's is unique in refusing to admit the relevance of sex where arahanship is the aim. There are two versions, the finer occurring in the Saṃyutta Nikāya:[1]

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[1] *Cf*. Theragāthā, verse 1111, "great Physician," and verse 830, "Surgeon and Healer over whom there's none."

> "What should the woman's nature signify
> When consciousness is tense and firmly set,
> When knowledge rolleth ever on, when she
> By insight rightly comprehends the Norm?
>
> "To one for whom the question doth arise:
> Am I a woman [in these matters], or
> Am I a man, or what not am I then?
> To such an one is Māra fit to talk."

This appears in the verse as:

> "How should the woman's nature hinder us?
> Whose hearts are firmly set, who ever move
> With growing knowledge onward in the Path?
> What can that signify to one in whom
> Insight doth truly comprehend the Norm?
> On every hand the love of pleasure yields,
> And the thick gloom of ignorance is rent
> In twain. Know this, O Evil One, avaunt!
> Here, O destroyer! shalt thou not prevail."[2]

What an appeal for the equality of women the Saṃyutta version contains, and what a faith in its reality is manifested! Women as well as men can explore and make discovery in the remoter but none the less close, in the less used but none the less malleable processes of their own minds. There is nothing in their nature to prevent them from willing and from attaining. That a woman could be represented as making such an utterance is a proof that the old life of Hinduism in which women were regarded merely as child-bearers and as commodities was, if not suffering a decline, at least not passing entirely unquestioned. It is not unnatural that this appeal should emanate from a woman, for they were always there in the background. However slight their effect on a religion might appear to be externally, internally they had great influence, moulding it because they were *in* it, actively interested, and in reality colouring the opinions held by their men-folk.

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[1] Saṃy. Nik., V., § 2.

[2] Therīgāthā, xxxvi.

The reasons inducing these women to seek the cloister were as varied as such kinds of reasons always must be, and as dependent on character and circumstances as such motives always are. The chief guiding impulse which supported several of them in coming to their decision to join the Order was the hope of Freedom, either in the more usual "phenomenal" sense of escape from worldly troubles, cares, responsibilities, temptations, griefs, from boredom and from the cloying senses; or in the wider, more "transcendental" sense of release from the round of existences. If they could break the Five Fetters of lust of sense, ill-will, delusion of the self, the taint of rites and ritual, and doubts, they would, they thought, no longer be bound to the dread circle, running ever on from birth to birth.[1] Entry into the Order was in no way dependent on social status, and by the sixth century B.C. the importance attached to the notion of Release had filtered through all strata of society and was not the monopoly, like Plato's philosophy, of a leisured class, but was something which could be understood, striven for and held by high and low alike.

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[1] Therīgāthā, lvi.

Gotama did not set out to influence individual men and women to enter the Order. Hence a direct suggestion from him is never the reason for their joining. By his teaching and preaching he never made his listeners feel that it was impossible for them to obtain self-mastery, calm, salvation, or peace,[1] while they were still leading a household life; yet he did not minimise the difficulties of this as compared with the facilities afforded by adopting the homeless state, where at least it would be much easier to persist in these conditions. Reading between the lines such passages as these sound like monkish utterances: "This house-life is pain, the seat of impurity and an ascetic life is an open-air life. . . .[2] A hole-and-corner life is all a home can give, while Pilgrimage is in the Open. . . .[3] Full of hindrances is household life, a path defiled by passion: free as air is the life of him who has renounced all worldly things.[4] . . . "Cramping is household life, a dusty path ! Open and wide is the way of renunciation ! Not easy it is while living the household life to practise the higher life, full and entire, supremely pure, pure like well-wrought conch-shell."[5] But an impartial view is attributed to Gotama in another part of the Majjhima where he is made to say that both the busy life and the life without bustle may be either a success or a failure.[6] He never urged people to leave their mothers, fathers and kinsfolk to follow him into the homeless way for the sake of finding nirvāna. He was innocent, although accused, of being a deliberate breaker of homes; because he shared the conviction, embedded in the East, that all people are at different stages of spiritual evolution, working out their own destinies according to an immutable law of cause and effect; and that a way which would meet the needs of some would be inopportune and useless for others. Not only "the compositions of souls are infinitely varied one with another," as St. Gregory said, but he also held that their experiences in countless numbers of former existences have been infinitely varied. Gotama's ardour to show men and women the higher Way may have been tempered by the knowledge that even if they could attain arahanship while still in the world,[1] as was demonstrated in the case of Sujātā,[2] and possibly of Khemā,[3] to name only two women, they could not there retain it; and by the conviction that the destinies of all were not ripe enough to lead a life of strenuous self-culture. He also took into account considerations of a worldly nature concerning domestic happiness. In those far-off days it was the hope of Release, or more mundane reasons, or the two together, which brought women from all ranks of life and from various castes and differing conditions seeking admission into the Order, and in many cases winning great treasure as a result of their discipline.

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[1] *Cf.* Dialogues, iii., 54.

[2] Sutta-Nipāta, verse 405.

[3] Majjhima, i., 240.

[4] Tevijja Sutta, ch. i., 47, and Dialogues, i., p. 78.

[5] Puggala-Paññatti, ch. iv., 24.

[6] Majjhima, ii., 197.

A table is appended showing from what castes the authors of the Therīgāthā are said to have come.

Royal and Noble Entrants.	23.	i., iv., v.-x., xiii., xiv., xv., xvi., xviii., xix., xx., xxv., xxxv., xl., xli., lii., lv., lxiii., lxxiii.
Entrants from Families of great Merchants.[4]	13.	iii., xii., xxiii., xxviii., xxx., xxxiii., xxxiv., xlvi., xlvii., liii., liv., lxiv., lxxii.
Entrants from Eminent Brahman Families.	7.	ii., xxiv., xxxi., xxxii., xxxvi., lxvii., lxxi.

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[1] Cmy. on Kathā-Vatthu, iv., 1, and *cf.* Dhp., verse 142, and see below, p. 366 ff.

[2] Therīgāthā, liii.

[3] *Ibid.*, lii.

[4] This is considered by Winternitz to be the best translation of *seṭṭhi.*

Entrants from Lesser Brahman Families.	9.	xxxvii., xlii., xliii., xliv., xlvi., lix., lx., lxi., lxix.
Entrants from Poor Brahman Families.	2.	xi., xlix.
Entrants from Other Castes.	4.	xxi., lxv., lxviii., lxx.
Entrants from Castes not given.[1]	11.	xvii., xxvii., xxix., xxxviii., xlv., xlviii., l., li., lvii., lviii., lxii.
Courtesans.	4.	xxii., xxvi., xxxix., lxvi.

Of the twenty-two royal entrants three were particularly famous in the Order: these were Mahāpajāpatī,[2] the reputed founder of the Order of Almswomen, who hence rather naturally ranked as foremost of those almswomen who were of long standing and experience (*rattaññu*);[3] Kisā-Gotamī,[4] another kinswoman of Gotama, who became chief among those who wear the rough robes (*lukhācīvaradharā*),[3] since she was apparently unusually ascetic; and Khemā,[5] who had been the consort of King Bimbisāra, and who while in the Order became distinguished for her great insight (*mahāpaññā*)[3] and as a giver of a standard, an honour which she shared with Uppalavaṇṇā. "The believing lay-sister, brethren, when rightly admonishing her only daughter, dear and beloved, would thus admonish her . . . 'If thou, my dear, go forth from home to the homeless, see that thou become like the almswoman Khemā and the almswoman Uppalavaṇṇā.' These, almsmen, are the standard, these are the measure of my almswomen disciples, even Khemā and Uppalavaṇṇā."[6] And again in the Anguttara Nikāya, Gotama is represented as saying "The faithful almswoman desires in this wise, 'Let me be as Khemā and Uppalavaṇṇā.' Of my (ordained female) disciples

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[1] This number includes Paṭācārā's Thirty and her Five Hundred. At V., iv., p. 272 it is said that there are four families (*kula*): the *khattiya*, *brāhmaṇa*, *vessa* and *sudda*.

[2] Therīgāthā, lv.

[3] Ang., i., p. 25.

[4] Therīgāthā, lxiii.; Dhp. Cmy. on verse 395.

[5] Therīgāthā, lii.

[6] Saṃy. Nik., xvii., 3, § 24 (4); Ang., i., p. 88.

Khemā and Uppalavaṇṇā were as scales (and a measure to equalise and measure the virtues of my other disciples)."[1] Nothing is said to indicate why these two women came to be regarded as a criterion. Only the fact that it was so remains. Was it because their special powers, the one wisdom, the other will, could be directed towards any end, and were not specialised in one particular direction? They were not celebrated for gifts of the Higher Vision, knowledge of the Dhamma, nor for memories of former births. The fundamental idea involved in regarding them as the norm by which to gauge others may have been that their gifts, though not necessarily at the pitch of high perfection to which they had brought them, could be directly applied in everyday life. For example, of Khemā it was said[2] that "a lovely rumour has gone abroad, that she is sage, accomplished, shrewd, widely learned, a brilliant talker (*citta-kathī*), of goodly ready wit."

It is rather a curious coincidence that of the thirteen women who came from great merchant families, one, Dhammadinnā,[3] became perhaps the greatest preacher of them all: she was regarded as foremost among the almswomen who could preach (*dhammakathikā*).[4] Belonging to this caste were also Sukkā,[5] who was likewise renowned in this art, and Paṭācārā,[6] who became versed in the Vinaya,[7] and who was revered by many women to whom she had shown the Way as a saviour of no less persuasiveness than Gotama himself. Had contact with city life and its ceaseless drift of peoples trained them to use the opportunities of estimating and appealing to the differences of outlook and knowledge among their audiences, thereby enabling them to evoke the response on which their hopes were set? Experience of the ways of mankind was probably valuable in the early days of Buddhist missionary enterprise. Partly because women had never been secluded in their lay-life, but had mixed freely in society, they were able in the propagation of the Doctrine to play a sustained and serviceable part. Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā,[1] the ex-Jain, and Uppalavaṇṇā,[2] so-called because she had a skin like the colour in the heart[3] of a dark blue lotus, also developed their special powers to the maximum; the one becoming famous for her swiftness to reach the higher knowledge (*khippābhiññā*),[4] and the other for having in eminent degree the gift of *Iddhi* (*iddhimantā*).[5] Sujātā attained arahanship while still a laywoman; she was probably the only one, or at most one of the two among the reputed authors of verses, to have achieved this end.[6]

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[1] Ang. Nik., xii., 2, tr. Gooneratne.

[2] Saṃy. Nik., xliv., 10, § 1.

[3] Therīgāthā, xii.

[4] *Cf.* Ang., i., 25.

[5] Therīgāthā, xxxiv.

[6] *Ibid.*, xlvii.

[7] *Cf.* Ang., i., 25 and *cf.* Bode, *J.R.A.S.*, 1893.

A great number of the almswomen under discussion belonged to brahmin families, as might be expected if it be borne in mind that toleration and the assimilation of new ideas were then, as they still are, characteristic marks of Hinduism; in the same way as the religious interest is, and always has been, characteristic of the entire Indian culture. The lack of dogma and of strictness in Hinduism made it easy for its members to equip themselves with fresh religious ideas, and thus it is not surprising that the priestly caste yielded a large number of recruits to the new teaching. And once converted to the Doctrine of the Master many of the old priestly superstitions and rites dropped naturally away, for it was innocent of all such accretions, of all such mistaken aids towards leading the good life.

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[1] Therīgāthā, xlvi.

[2] *Ibid.*, lxvi. and *cf.* Bode, *J.R.A.S.*, 1893. Possibly not the same Uppalavaṇṇā as the one whose story has been told above, p. 155 ff.

[3] *Psalms of the Sisters*, ed. C. A. F. Rhys Davids, London, 1909, p. 111, notes 2 and 3.

[4] *Cf.* Ang., i., 25.

[5] Intense will power, or "Mystic potency of transformation"; *Cf.* Ang., i., 25.

[6] If there was another it was Khemā. Therīgāthā Cmy. on lii., see above p. 167, and below, p. 180.

Of the entrants from brahmin families, the most eminent were Bhaddā of the Kāpilas,[1] who became famous for her memories of former lives (*pubbenivāsam anussarantīnā*),[2] and who is described as learned, fluent, wise and famed for her religious discourses;[3] Nanduttarā,[4] who was a renowned speaker and a great debater, converted from Jainism to Buddhism by Mahā-Moggallāna; Sakulā,[5] to whom was assigned the topmost place for the gift of the Higher Vision, or the Eye Celestial (*dibbacakkhukā*)[6] as it was often called; and Sundarī[7] who appears to have made a great many converts, including "all her kinsfolk, beginning with her mother, and their attendants." She and the other Uttamā[8] are the only almswomen who portray themselves in any kind of physical relationship with Gotama—the one saying "and thine, thy daughter am I, issue of thy mouth,"[9] and the other "Buddha's daughter I, Born of his mouth, his blessed word."

Of the entrants from families whose caste is not given, Soṇā[10] was placed first for her capacity of effort (*āraddhaviriyā*).[11] There were two other women, each of whom was placed foremost in her class. To neither is a verse ascribed. They were Bhaddā Kaccānā,[12] first among those who have attained to great gifts (*mahābhiññappattā*),[1] that is to supernormal lore; and Sigalamātā,[2] chief among those who are emancipated through faith (*saddhāvimuttā*).[1]

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[1] Therīgāthā, xxxvii., and *cf.* Bode, *J.R.A.S.*, 1893.

[2] *Cf.* Ang., i., p. 25.

[3] V., iv., 290, 292.

[4] Therīgāthā, xlii.

[5] *Ibid.*, xliv.

[6] *Cf.* Ang., i., p. 25. These powers are included among the culminating stages of *paññā* or *vijjā*.

[7] Therīgāthā, lxix.

[8] *Ibid.*, xxxi.

[9] *Orasā mukhato jātā* an idiom, lit. breast. Verse 336.

[10] Therīgāthā, xlv.

[11] *Cf.* Ang., i., p. 25.

[12] Possibly Gotama's wife. See E. J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History*, London, 1927, pp. 49, 59, 60, 110.

At the time of the inception of the Order and for some time after, it was regarded as perfectly respectable for women to enter upon the homeless life. It was only later that the Order lost its primitive character and became a refuge for the poor, the unsuccessful, the unmarried and the widowed, the entrants being looked upon as unfortunates who had found life too difficult on account of the fruits of deeds done in former becomings. The Buddhist nunneries in Burma to-day are largely filled by such women.[3]

From the above analysis it will be seen that not only did the women flock to the Order, coming from different parts of North India and from various walks in life to mingle in the Order heedless of caste distinctions, but that there was nothing in their station or in their previous circumstances in this existence to hinder them from attaining arahanship,[4] as they are all said to have done, nor to prevent them from becoming remarkably proficient in some aspect of their calling, as several cases attest.

No questions were put to the entrant concerning the conditions of her life, except those referring to her being healthy, being a free woman, being free from debts and not being in the King's service, and no value was attached to her having been celibate before entry. Thus the Order was open to widows and matrons as well as to the unmarried. It is interesting to notice the proportion of the widowed, the married and the unmarried among those reputed makers of verses who entered upon the homeless way. There is no clue to the status of twenty-one almswomen, although from internal evidence it may be supposed that of these six were unmarried;[1] and no hint is given as to whether the Thirty Almswomen who entered under Paṭācārā[2] were married or not. The unmarried certainly number thirty-two, a fact highly suggestive of the improved status of women under Buddhism; for they now stand out as having minds, characters and wills of their own, emerging however slowly and laboriously from the old grooves, in which their complete dependence on men shackled their entire life, which was led on the assumption that their whole duty consisted in worshipping their husband as a god and bearing him sons for the performance of his funeral rites.

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[1] *Cf.* Ang., i., p. 25.

[2] Variant reading: Singāla. A psalm is ascribed to Singāla-Pitar, Theragāthā, xviii.; Singāla, a merchant of Benares is mentioned in Jātaka, 542.

[3] A Burman student in Rangoon has kindly supplied me with the following note, after making inquiries of his great-aunt who is a nun:

"Fifty per cent. of the women who have become nuns have done so because they are poor and unsuccessful: the remaining 50 per cent. are disgusted with this world and have become nuns in order to free themselves from the troubles and evils of life." In Colombo also the *upasikas* (nuns) are for the most part widows, ostensibly trying to find solitude to lead the religious life.

[4] *Cf.* Theragāthā, ccliv., and Sumedhā, Therīgāthā, lxxiii.: "Nibbāna for the daughter of a King."

It does not seem absolutely certain whether Paṭācārā should be numbered among the unmarried or among the married and widowed. She left her home with one of the serving men of the house, who is described as her lover, and by him had two children; but on the other hand he is later addressed by her as "husband,"[3] and so lamented on his death: "Through me my husband is dead." But when she went to Gotama for help in her grief, he referred ambiguously to the father of her children: "Just as now thou art shedding tears because of the death of the children and the rest, so hast thou, in the unending round of life, been shedding tears, because of the death of the children and the rest, more abundant than the waters of the four oceans."[1] And again: "O Paṭācārā, to one passing to another world no child nor other kin is able to be a shelter, or a hiding-place or a refuge."[1] It is however possible that this man became her lawful husband, for, as Rhys Davids points out,[2] there are no Buddhist ceremonies of marriage, which is regarded as a civil rite, and performed without the intervention of priests.

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[1] Therīgāthā, xiv., xxiii., xxiv., xxx., xxxiv., xlii.

[2] *Ibid.*, xlviii.

[3] *Cf.* C. A. F. Rhys Davids, *Gotama the Man*, London, 1928, p. 149: "Paṭāchārā was the good wife of a worthy husband. He had been a slave, but he was with good people, who set him free."

The number of married entrants was rather more than half the unmarried, namely eighteen, but in addition to these must be reckoned Paṭācārā's Five Hundred.[3] Of the married, three were widows,[4] and one Sakulā,[5] judging by internal evidence, was probably a widow. In her verse she speaks of leaving her daughter and her son and her treasures and her store of grain, as though she were the sole owner, and she does not mention her husband. Four were virtually widows, for two of them, Bhaddā of the Kāpilas[6] and Soṇā,[7] renounced the world when their husbands did; one, Cāpā,[8] having by her gibes driven her husband out of the house and into the Order, followed him; the other, Isidāsī,[9] finding after three attempts to lead the married life that she had not the qualities of wifehood, gave up the struggle and joined the Order.

Strictly speaking the Order asked for the consent of the parents,[10] and the world for the husband's consent;[11] but because the Order wanted to keep the friendship of the world it also made it a pācittiya offence for a woman to be ordained unless she had her husband's permission.[1] It was probably in order to discover whether aspirants were really free of home ties and could be spared that the consent of the immediate guardians had usually to be obtained. The children were regarded as the property of their parents who would hence have a legitimate voice in the disposal of their careers. It would have been an unheard-of breach of convention for the wife to have taken the matter into her own hands and not to have consulted with her husband before applying for admission. However much the command " Be ye therefore refuges unto yourselves "[2] might apply in solitary search for nirvāna, the law of guardians must still be respected by those in the world. The vicissitudes that many of these women went through in order to procure this permission, preliminary to becoming almswomen, demonstrate incidentally some of the motives and reasons which prompted their desire to leave the world.

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[1] Therīgāthā Cmy. on xlvii.

[2] *E.R.E.* art. Family (Buddhist).

[3] Therīgāthā, l., 500 is an idiom, meaning dozens and dozens.

[4] *Ibid.*, xvii., xlvii., lv.

[5] *Ibid.*, xliv.

[6] *Ibid.*, xxxvii.

[7] *Ibid.*, xlv.

[8] *Ibid.*, lxviii.

[9] *Ibid.*, lxxii.

[10] MV., i., 54; CV., x., 17, 1.

[11] See above, p. 149 ff.

The consent of the parents is shown sometimes as hard to gain, sometimes as easy and sometimes as impossible; but in many cases simply the facts are stated and afford no clue. Thus Sīhā[3] became a believer on hearing the Master preach and, obtaining her parents' consent, she entered the Order. It is not said whether or not she experienced any difficulty. Sujātā,[4] with almost an excess of duty, obtained consent both from her parents and from her husband. Guttā[5] obtained consent from both her parents, and Rohiṇī[6] did likewise after she had taught them the Dhamma. In none of these cases is it said that there was a conflict of wills. But Sundarī[7] had to wring consent from her mother, who not unnaturally wished to dissuade her daughter from joining the Order, thereby abandoning the home. For there had been trouble in the family. Sundarī's younger brother had recently died, and her father at the Therī Vāsiṭṭhī's[1] suggestion went to Gotama to find relief from his grief, and became converted by hearing the teaching on the Dhamma and joined the Order. When news of his renunciation was brought to their home Sundarī's mother declared that she too had

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[1] V., iv., pp. 334-335.

[2] Mhp., ii., 33.

[3] Therīgāthā, xl.; *cf.* Theragāthā, ccxlviii. Adhimutta attained arahanship while still a novice, and went home to get his mother's permission for full ordination.

[4] Therīgāthā, liii.

[5] *Ibid.*, lvi.

[6] *Ibid.*, lxvii.

[7] *Ibid.*, lxix., and *cf.* Theragāthā, xxvii., Lomasakangiya's mother feared for his health; and *ibid.*, ccli. Raṭṭhāpala only obtained his parents' consent with great difficulty.

"A mind to leave the world
Near him of chiefest wisdom to abide." (Verse 326.)

and implored her daughter to enjoy her wealth. But far otherwise were Sundarī's thoughts: she had no intention of taking any delight in the "cattle and horses, elephants, jewels and rings" that her father had put far from him; she declared that she too, like him, had a mind to leave the world. When the mother realised how strong was this determination she graciously capitulated by saying:

"May this, then, thine intention, Sundarī
Thy heart's desire, be crownèd with success." (Verse 329.)

With one accord these two women turned towards the Order in their double bereavement; the mother with the feeling that now the Order was a suitable refuge for her, old and past her prime, and fondly hoping that her daughter, young and with all life opening up before her, would stay in the world and enjoy her possessions. But such a plan made no appeal to the daughter who was rapidly maturing spiritually.

Isidāsī[2] gained her father's consent; since she had been repudiated by one husband after another it seemed profitless to stay in the world; the prospect of life in the Order would have appeared to her like balm on the buffetings of men's unkindness, affording her the possibility of erasing her disappointments by achievement in another sphere. Here also it would have seemed that she might expiate the bad karma she had laid up for herself in other becomings,

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[1] See Ps. li. She also had been comforted, and more than comforted by Gotama after she had lost her child. See below, p. 196.

[2] Therīgāthā, lxxii.

> "Nay, but the evil karma I have done,
> That will I expiate and wear away." (Verse 431.)

This is an ascetic idea, for, as her father explained to her, there is scope here (*idh'eva*) in the world "to walk according to the Norm" (verse 430). This whole poem, attributed to Isidāsī, savours of Jainism. It does not read like the earlier and more spontaneous outpourings, but as an elaborate and finished product by the hand of a literary expert. It was probably composed at a later date, and then added to the collection. In particular two points corroborate this view: the notion of expiating an evil karma is particularly Jainist; and Isidāsī is said to have been drawn into the Order by a lady of the obviously Jain name of Jinadattā, mentioned nowhere but here.

Sumedhā[1] entered the Order against her parents' wishes: they could not deter her, and one of the alternatives put forward by her in her long and passionate harangue seemed to them too fearful to contemplate.

> "Mother
> And father mine, never will I again
> As a laywoman break my fast and eat.
> Here will I sooner lay me down and die.[2] (Verse 460.)

> "The afflicted mother wept; the father stunned
> With grief strove to dissuade and comfort her
> Who prostrate lay upon the palace floor." (Verse 461.)

Knowing the ease with which Indians can carry out this threat to die at will, the parents would have found here their chief reason for yielding. Sumedhā's love of domestic life was not strong; she does not present the type of dutiful daughter, but appears as a girl of independent character, declaring that "my duty lies not in the life of the house." In addition to these dissensions with her parents she refused the royal suitor they brought to her, cut off her hair[1] and practised meditation. But then came her triumph, for in a state of exaltation, by her eloquence and because she was "learned and in the system of our Lord well trained" she was able to convert her parents, her suitor and his retinue.

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[1] Therīgāthā, lxxiii.

[2] *Cf.* Raṭṭhapāla Sutta, Majjhima, ii., 57. He used a similar threat in order to make his parents consent.

The mother of Kumāra Kassapa,[2] mentioned in the Anguttara and the Theragāthā Commentary, was refused permission to enter the Order by her parents, but when in due course she married she gained it from her husband.

An unusual case comes to the fore with Abhirūpa-Nandā,[3] a beautiful Sākiyan girl, who far from having to cajole her mother and father into giving their consent, was made to leave the world by her parents against her own wishes. This decision appears to have been their immediate response to the news of the death of her young Sākiyan kinsman, an event which took place on the day that she was to choose among her suitors. Their exact motives are hard to understand. It is conceivable that they thought that now she could not marry a Sākiyan (though it seems unlikely that Carabhūta would have been the only one eligible) she had better not marry at all. The marriages of the Sākiyans were largely governed by their tremendous family pride,[4] and it was one of the most exclusive clans. At all events in the face of this blow the parents appeared to have been convinced that the Order was the right place for their daughter, and *faute de mieux* Abhirūpa-Nandā was sent off there to make the best of what at first appeared to her to be but a bad business.

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[1] *Cf.* Medieval picture by Italian master in Siena, of St. Catherine cutting off her hair before renouncing the world.

[2] Ang., i., xiv., 3, note 1, tr. Gooreratne; Theragāthā Cmy. on clxi.

[3] Therīgāthā, xix.

[4] *Cf.* Dialogues, i., 93, 94, where the legend of their ancestors, incestuous lest they should injure the purity of their line is given; and

Uppalavaṇṇā[1] resembles Nandā to the extent that she did not marry, but in her case it was not that she could not choose a particular husband but because she had too many suitable offers of marriage. When she came of age kings and commoners came from all parts of India to ask for her hand. Her father did not know to whom to give her, so much bewildered was he. The only solution of the difficulty that he could devise was to suggest to Uppalavaṇṇā that she should adopt the homeless way, a suggestion in which fortunately she gladly acquiesced, and " his words were as if oil a hundred times refined had anointed her head."

On the whole, then, these unmarried women did not fare so badly. But the success of their pleading with their parents should not be taken to mean that these were anxious to be rid of them. Only in the case of Abhirūpa-Nandā is there the least hint that a woman was made to join because her parents did not know what else to do with her; for one cannot help feeling that if Uppalavaṇṇā had been determined to marry her father would have given her to the man she chose. The situation rather was that by now it was becoming a more ordinary thing for women to become almswomen, that they had the sympathy of the men with their desire to leave the world, and that the men did not stand in their way.

Jātaka Cmy. on 465 where it is related that Pasēnadi attempted to secure a Sākiyan girl as his wife in order to gain the confidence of the Buddhist almsmen, but the Sākiyans had too much family pride to consent.

[1] Therīgāthā, lxiv. For the fuller story of an almswoman of the same name see above, p. 155 ff.

This view is borne out by the instances of women who asked their husbands if they might join the Order. Though fewer in number than those recorded to have asked their parents, they were met with the same kinds of response: sometimes encouragement amounting to inducement, sometimes calm acquiescence, and sometimes flat refusal.

Khemā,[1] although she did not take the initiative, might be included in the first of these groups. She was the consort of King Bimbisāra. As far as is ascertainable she showed no anxiety to enter the Order, for she was so much infatuated with her own beauty that she dared not go to see Gotama. The King, who was sincerely devout, deprecated her aloofness, and he contrived so that she should see the Master, for he wanted her to be a believer too. The result, according to the Commentaries, was that she attained arahanship immediately on witnessing the vision which Gotama arranged for her, but according to the Apadāna this moment did not arrive until, with the King's consent, she had entered the Order. This version may be due to mere monkish dislike of the thought of a woman's rapid attainment.

Dhammadinnā[2] found no difficulty in obtaining the consent of her husband, Visākha, to join the Order, for he had just decided to do so himself, and hence would no longer need his wife at home. One day, when he had felt the force of the doctrine after hearing Gotama preach, he came home, and in the way permitted by the superiority of the husband told his wife of the restrictions now placed upon him as One-who-returns-no-more; she thereupon conceived the notion of becoming an almswoman. For what would her home have been to her without him? She refused the alternatives which he put to her of staying at home, or of going back to her own family, and desired instead to be allowed to leave the world. "It is well,

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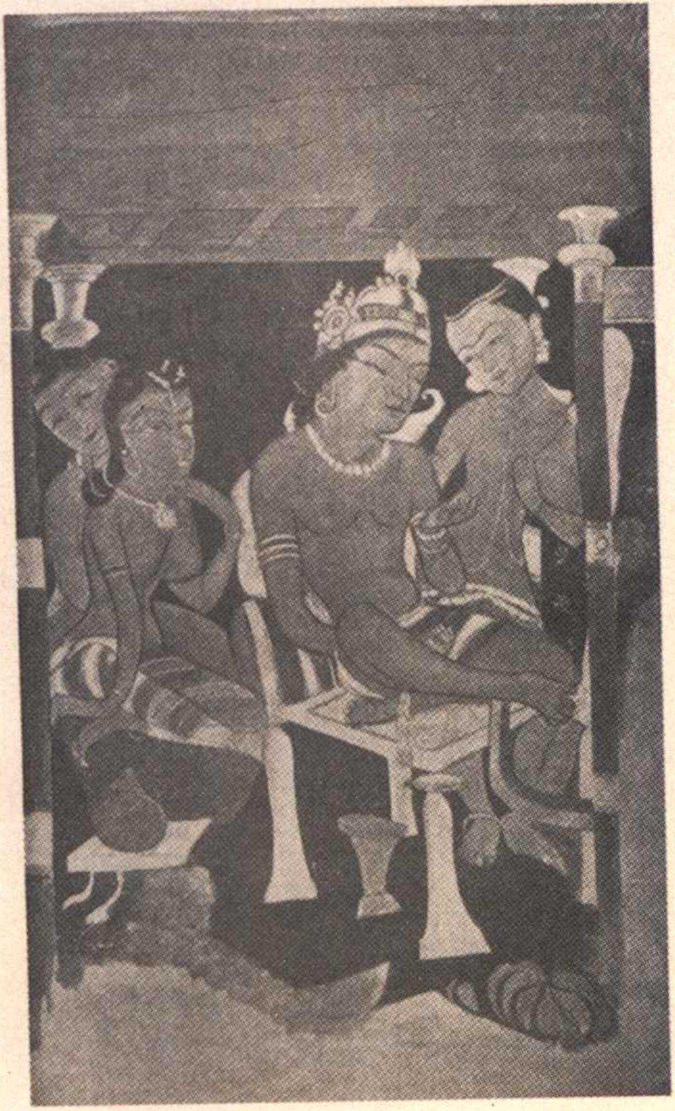
[1] Therīgāthā, lii.

[2] *Ibid.*, xii.

PLATE II



BIMBISĀRA. QUEEN AND ATTENDANTS
(Lady Herringham, Ajanta Frescoes, India Society. 1915)

[*face p.* 180

Dhammadinnā," came his reply, free of any affectation that the homeless way was not the way for women. And he sent her off to the almswomen in a golden palanquin.

Muttā[1] induced her hunch-backed brahmin lord, possibly not without a struggle, to give his consent.

In this connection may be mentioned Puṇṇā or Puṇṇikā.[2] She had been a domestic slave, but her master had been so much pleased by the way in which she had converted the baptist-brahmin that he had freed her, allowing her to make his house her home, and now was willing to meet her request to enter the Order.

Two less fortunate women met with refusals. The almswoman known as Little Sturdy,[3] having heard both Gotama and Mahāpajāpatī preach, was convinced and wished to join the Order. But she could not at once gain her husband's consent, and being a devoted and obedient wife she went on with her tasks without protests, but meanwhile she obtained Insight into the Truth of Becoming. Then one day a flame of fire consumed all the curry that she was cooking, upon which she gave up wearing ornaments, so dear to the Indian heart, and put aside all the symbols of worldly success which, as she now saw, were but the emblems of transience. This renunciation made such a deep impression on her husband, that he honoured the earnestness of her wish and brought her to Mahāpajāpatī in a golden palanquin.[4]

Dhammā[5] did not fare even so well as Little Sturdy, for she entirely failed to gain her husband's consent. Obediently she remained at home until his death, after which she entered the Order.

No complaints are heard from these women of the bondage to their husbands. Room is found for the expression of individual dislike of particular circumstances, but no general attacks are levelled against the position of the married woman and no unquenchable bitterness rises up at the one-sidedness of the authority.

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[1] *Ibid.*, xi. [2] *Ibid.*, lxv. [3] *Ibid.*, i.

[4] The Cmy. says "as Visākha brought Dhammadinnā," see Ps. xii.

[5] Therīgāthā, xvii.

Naturally there was a certain proportion of women who were not "guarded,"[1] orphans and unmarried, widows and virtual widows; those whose nearest relatives for whom they had made a home or who had made a home for them were either dead or had already renounced the world. To some of these perhaps entry into the Order seemed to be, if not a natural, at least a helpful and open course. Such were Dhammadinnā,[2] who when her husband told her that he was going to renounce the world, immediately asked him to suffer her to do likewise; and Bhaddā of the Kāpilas[3] who went forth when her husband Pippali did, but not before the two had consulted together;[4] and the wife of Vīra,[5] who trying to lure her husband back to the world was "deeply moved" by his verse, expressive of self-conquest and steadfastness, and saying to herself "my husband has won to this—what good is domestic life to me?" joined the almswomen and soon "acquired the Threefold Lore." Another instance is that of poor Soṇā,[6] who was badly treated by her sons and daughters-in-law after her husband had entered the Order. Finding herself no longer wanted, and wounded in her self-esteem, she declared: "What have I to do with living in a house where no regard is shown to me?" and went to join the almswomen.

The unnamed nurse of Mahāpajāpatī[7] joined the Order when her mistress did. The texts throw no light upon her motives. Was it personal devotion to her charge and a longing to remain near to her? Was it imitation? Or did she anticipate and dread a future devoid of its central interest? The only point that is certain is that she was not animated by religious emotion; for twenty-five years after she went forth she could find no peace of mind, and her "every thought was soaked in the fell drug of sense-desire" (verse 68).

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[1] V., iii., p. 139. [2] Therīgāthā, xii. [3] *Ibid.*, xxxvii.

[4] Theragāthā Cmy. on cclxi. [5] *Ibid.*, on viii.

[6] Therīgāthā, xlv., *cf.* Dhp. Cmy. on verse 115; possibly the two are not the same.

[7] Therīgāthā, xxxviii.

No such doubts surround the motives of Sundarī-Nandā the Beautiful.[1] When all her near relatives had renounced the world she found that it contained no further interest for her. Wishing only to be as near to her kinsfolk as possible she did likewise. She went forth "not from faith, but from love of her kin," and it is therefore not surprising that she continued intoxicated with her own beauty even after her renunciation. Another woman, Abhayā,[2] faithful in friendship, took Orders when her close friend Abhaya's mother did, as did Vijayā[3] when her great friend and companion Khemā joined. In her case it was perhaps not so much love as imitation shown in her argument, "If she as a King's consort can leave the world, surely I can." Her humble position in the world was as nothing compared with Khemā's exalted one, and Khemā was given every opportunity of becoming acquainted with the teaching of the Master.[4] Imitation too, not blind, but founded on assurance in a trustworthy leader, caused Sāriputta's three sisters[5] to follow in his footsteps. "This can be no ordinary system, no ordinary renunciation if one like our brother have followed it."[6]

Two women who appear to have been self-guarders (*sārakkhā*),[7] and to have had freedom of choice concerning their way of living, refrained from entering the Order until they had fulfilled certain domestic obligations. Sumanā,[1] though fain to leave the world, put off doing so for the remainder of her grandmother's lifetime in order to take care of her. Motives of affection rather than of duty may well have been operative in determining her upon this course, for the grandmother in no way appears to have been a tiresome old lady: she was also beloved by her grandson Pasēnadi.[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, xli. [2] *Ibid.*, xxvii. [3] *Ibid.*, lvii.
[4] See above, p. 180. [5] Therīgāthā, lix., lx., lxi.
[6] Therīgāthā Cmy. on lix. [7] V., iii., 139.

Mahāpajāpatī's[3] reputed initiative in pleading, until she had secured it, for the foundation of the Order of Almswomen will never be forgotten. At the same time it appears as if she considered that her first duty was to her husband, the father of Gotama, for it was not until he died that she is said to have set forth with her historic demand, or if this were not so, at least seeking entry for herself.

Four converts renounced a life of lax morality to go out into homelessness, there being no ban upon the admission of women of loose life.[4] But of these, only one, namely Vimalā,[5] the daughter of a courtesan and herself a courtesan, was influenced in her decision to join the Order by the immediately preceding circumstances in her life. She was made to repent by Mahā-Moggallāna. He is said to have used the theme of the worthlessness and the foulness of the body to deter her from following her habitual profession, to such effect that she became first a lay-disciple and then entered the Order.

Unfortunately neither the verses nor the Vinaya give any hint of the psychological processes that Aḍḍhakāsī,[6] the daughter of a *seṭṭhi* of Kāsī, experienced, and there is no clue to the reasoning which she followed and which resulted in her exchanging her life as a courtesan for that of an almswoman. Perhaps this is sufficiently accounted for by her tiring of her loveliness, as age came creeping upon her. In common too with many of her contemporaries she appears to have longed to terminate the round of becomings, as they fancied was possible, rather than to engage upon them again and yet again. These reasons probably weighed with her more than did repentance for her " moral disorder."[1]

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[1] Therīgāthā, xvi.

[2] Saṃy. Nik., iii., 3, § 2.

[3] Therīgāthā, lv.

[4] *Cf.* Eckenstein, *Woman under Monasticism*, p. 193.

[5] Therīgāthā, xxxix.; Theragāthā, cclxiii.

[6] Therīgāthā, xxii.

It is harder to follow the mental history of Abhaya's mother,[2] a courtesan of King Bimbisāra, and of Ambapālī,[3] the famous courtesan appointed by several princes, after they had fought among themselves to possess her. Of Abhaya's mother nothing is known in this connection except that she was converted by her son, who made her believe in the impurity of the body. Ambapālī too was stimulated by the preaching of her son to work for insight, and studied Impermanence as illustrated in her own ageing body.

The verses of these four women show that the spark to light the vision of higher things was within their grasp. It needed but their effort and determination and choice, their will to kindle it, in its burning to consume what had been.

Women such as these emphasise the irrelevance, as far as the Order was concerned, of the kind of life that the entrant had led up to the time of her application for the pabbajjā ordination; and also the strong and subtle influence of the Buddhist way of thinking. The Order of Almswomen yielded an accessible and honourable alternative to all those who wanted to relinquish the line of business they had hitherto been pursuing. To a large extent it was a prop and stay against any relapse into the conditions of their former way of living. For once admitted members found themselves expected to conform to a strict moral rule.

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[1] A phrase of Cuthbert Butler's.

[2] Therīgāthā, xxvi.

[3] *Ibid.*, lxvi.

As time went on chances for backsliding were gradually diminished and the limits beyond which transgression was condoned became ever narrower and narrower.

From what has been said, it will be seen that not all women were dependent on the decrees of guardians, and also that they were only free to do as they pleased if they had none. If husbands renounced the world they *ipso facto* renounced their wives, and needed not to ask for their consent to take this step. But with wives the situation was different: they were not free, they were bound by social convention, and the shrine at which duty must be offered was the home. In the last resort they had to abide by their husband's decision whatever it might be. Only when they were without ties, or when they had sympathetic parents (who, incidentally, would then escape the necessity of providing the marriage-dowry) or a sympathetic husband, could they become voluntary members of a group other than that to which they involuntarily belonged, and the opportunity be afforded them to exclaim, "I was met by mighty days,"[1] the days of their working for, attaining and retaining arahanship.

During their career in the Order it was almost obligatory upon them now and again to make a comparison of their life there with their life in the world, and several verses contain these reminiscences. Unlike entrants into Western convents, the Buddhist almswoman was not enjoined to attempt the impossible, and to forget, as though it had never been, her life in the world. No dead stop, no sharp break in the *continuum* of memory, was to be made, for there was neither the one nor the other in the *continuum* of personality or consciousness (*citta*, *manas*, *viññāṇa*). The various phases of consciousness were regarded as processes, streams whose causal series it was psychologically impossible to cut up into discrete fragments or sections. With entry into the Order the almswoman was not expected to begin with a clean slate, and to become a different person, new, disconnected from her past mental history. The struggle was not pitched in the effort to forget, but in the effort to develop and advance from a lower to a higher state. The notion appears to have been that help for this growth was to be drawn from thinking over the past, not by suppressing it, and it was based on the assumption that the past would not bear comparison with the present, which was the way of the wise, and hence would not be formidable and detrimental to the adoption of an unsullied religious attitude. On the contrary. The *khandhas* (component parts) if steadily viewed would be seen in their true light as the roots of the cravings of lust and sensuous pleasure[1] which bind man for ever to ceaseless becomings. If this fact were borne in mind, and only by a full investigation proceeding from wider knowledge could it be grasped; and if it were kept in the foreground of consciousness, even in times of depression and apparent hopelessness of attainment, the memories of sensuous joys would not work like cankers in the subconsciousness or in the consciousness, adding to the nameless discontent. By directing and consecrating the mind to the high reward for which these women had been content to lose their world, truant thoughts could be bested.[2] This was the weapon to be kept sharp to meet insidious old memories as they arose to garb the fictions of the world's delights in the dress of reality. During spiritual success these would be clearly known as constituents of the lower state, of life-lust, conceit and ignorance.[3] Recognised as such, though the battle might be long, they would be easier to combat and to control. "Memory's rapturous pain"[4] could be changed into rapturous pleasure, as is testified in the verses of those almswomen who found it hard to close the doors of the senses even after they had adopted the homeless life.[1] So they struggled to persevere in what they deemed to be the higher paths and did not seriously think of returning to the lower. Only in the extreme case of Sīhā,[2] "stung and inflated by memories of former days, o'er which I lacked control," wretched and miserable in the contest, but longing throughout to get an even tenor to her mind, is there any thought of returning to "the low life of the world": yet not here and now, but by suicide to return to it in another becoming—and that not by choice but by the working of karma.

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[1] A. E., "The Memory of Earth," *Collected Poems*, Poems, London, 1917.

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[1] *Cf.* Ps. lii.

[2] Therīgāthā, lvi.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] E. Brontë, *Remembrance.*

It would indeed have been foolish and unpractical to tell members of an unenclosed Order to forget that they had ever been laywomen. The Buddhist almswoman mixed freely with the world and was not cut off from it. It was all around her as a constant reminder of her former state. But where envy was looked upon as a fetter, and equanimity and tranquillity of mind as aims to be achieved, it could be relied upon as a doubly-working influence. Because it contained the evidence of inferiority, on the one side it would prevent almswomen from returning to it, and on the other it would increase both their desire to show the Way to others who as yet were not become as they, and in themselves to respond to the appeal "develop (*bhāvehi*) all that's good," as is told in joy by Jentī—

> "The seven factors (*satta bojjhangā*) of the awakened mind,
> Seven ways whereby we may Nirvāna win—
> All, all have I developed (*bhāvitā*) and made ripe."[3]

In many verses the danger of too much thinking over the past does not blacken the present, but makes it seem by contrast all the fairer, for the secular life is not always presented either in retrospect or in actuality as an enviable experience, abandoned solely for the sake of spiritual welfare. The memories thronging in such verses make it clear that escape into the Order was sometimes used as the means of combating an otherwise intolerable life, and that "the *vis a tergo* of goading circumstances" was responsible for a number of entrants. Many of the psalms recapitulate the shallowness and the unsatisfactoriness of the existence hitherto led by their reputed authors,[1] and then break out into a pæan of joy that all this is now past and over for them, replaced by some aspect of the bliss of nirvāna.

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[1] Therīgāthā, xi., xix., xxviii., xxxviii., xli., xliii., lvi.

[2] *Ibid.*, xl.

[3] *Ibid.*, xx.

Two women sing their escape from two similar burdens which they had endured. Muttā[2] feels the glory of freedom "From quern, from mortar and from my crookbacked lord"; and Sumangala's mother,[3] who had led a life of great poverty, revels in her new-found freedom "from kitchen drudgery" and in her escape from a life of stains and squalor among the cooking-pots where "Me my brutal husband ranked as even less than the sunshades he sits and weaves alway." Evidently looking for help, companionship and affection in this hard-hearted husband was like looking for pearls in granite. To such women the Order was a refuge. Their disillusion in life and in people gave way to an easy mind as the ignominy under which they had laboured was removed.

Guttā[4] had not the hardships of toil and cruelty to submit to. She was unmarried and was born in a brahmin's family, where there flourished the "lure of wealth." But she found life in the house distasteful to her partly on account of that very fact. The more cultured and serious-minded would revolt against the gross materialism which characterised some of the prosperous social groups of the day, and such as Guttā would find that life in the house yielded her unsatisfactory and uncongenial scope for her activity: it was therefore tedious in the extreme, and full of those unproductive happenings and events which absorb the energies while leaving in their wake the despondency and blankness of having accomplished nothing of any real importance. Guttā thought that she might find her sphere in the Order, but at first had no genuine religious vocation. Hers was a sad case, but not unusual. She had found that she was not properly adapted to the worldly life, and then she found that the demands of the religious life were unmanageable; for although she tried she could not concentrate on things of the mind or keep her heart from running after external interests. But as the Order did not require high credentials of religious maturity before admission, entrance for those who did not go in from purely religious motives presented no serious difficulties, but neither did it guarantee an end to troubles.

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[1] *Ibid.*, xi., xxi., xxxix., xlii., xlix., li., liv., lxiv., lxvi., lxxii.

[2] *Ibid.*, xi.

[3] *Ibid.*, xxi.

[4] *Ibid.*, lvi.

Another rich lady, Subhā the goldsmith's daughter,[1] after having become a stream-entrant, also fretted against the disadvantages of the household life.

> " In me arose discernment of the Truths.
> Thereat all earthly pleasures irked me sore . . .
> So I forsook my world . . .
> Turning my back upon no mean estate."

Just as some beat out their days under the cares and anxieties of poverty, so Subhā saw and feared the responsibilities of wealth; the fears of loss of property and loss by death, the agonies of mind and body which beset the slaves of the senses and make men corrupt and lustful, and the acquisitive instinct which promotes a general enmity: all these concomitants of riches she feared.[1] She distrusted life where

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[1] *Ibid.*, lxx.

> "Princes with goodly treasure, ample wealth,
> And broad domains ever in sense-desires
> Insatiate, envy each other's goods."[2]

She turned her back on them, strove for and found the calm steadfastness of nirvāna, using the detachment of the Order as a means of escape.

Anopamā,[3] too, though rich, beautiful and sought by many suitors, was disdainful of the world's baubles, and feeling that "profit to me in the life of the house there is none," entered the conventual life as a refuge from the bondage of all that she considered to be of so little value.

Subhā of Jīvaka's Mango-Grove,[4] whose body is said to have been truly lovely in all its members, besides becoming anxious over the round of life, distrusted the bane of the pleasures of the senses. She discerned that their perils would be destroyed if they were removed, and they would consequently cease to be alarming. Safety lay in renunciation. Because of the serenity of visions to which she had attained this was not so great a denial for her as it was for some of the other beautiful women. For she is not represented as having been in love with her own beauty as were Khemā[5] and Sundarī-Nandā,[6] and it appears to have come to be a source of fear to her rather than a source of enjoyment. The realm of the senses was to her no less than to some of the others a barren land which she determined to quit in favour of a land more full of promise, where yet would be "haunts that are empty."[7]

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[1] *Cf.* Theragāthā Cmy. on ccliv., where Bhaddiya says "When I was ruling my principality . . . I was ever fearful, nervous, distrustful."

[2] Saṃy. Nik., i., 3, § 8.

[3] Therīgāthā, liv.

[4] *Ibid.*, lxxi.

[5] *Ibid.*, lii.

[6] *Ibid.*, xli.

[7] *Ibid.*, lxxi., verse 389. Editor's note: "*suñña*, for the earnest Buddhist, connoting both solitude and the ejection of the Ego-delusion. *Cf.* Ps. xxxi., 46."

Sumedhā[1] was another who was averse from the pleasures of the senses:

> " I'll have naught of empty riches. Sense desires
> Repel and sicken me."

In addition she was afraid, like Subhā of Jīvaka's Mango-Grove, of the round of rebirths, and quotes some words ascribed to Gotama which run: " Long the wandering of them who, smitten, rise ever again " (verse 474).[2] She quivered with fear at the thought of the endless transmigration, to the notion of which she may have been accustomed from her early years, for her verse shows signs of being a late one, composed by the time that the monkish outlook, with its nervelessness and dread of being in the fray of life, had spread its influence and was at work upon contemporary thought, seeking to undermine the vitality of men. And here is presented life, not as a carefree, joyous, delightful thing as it was depicted in the Vedas, but as heavy-laden with anxieties and miseries, inevitably recurring through life-span after life-span, unless life in and of the world were repudiated.

Dissatisfaction and the uneasiness arising from unfulfilled desires drove others, besides Isidāsī,[3] to join the Order. She was frustrated in the traditional *rôle* of woman as wife. Two other women, highly trained mentally, could not rest until they had found an opening for the exercise of their special gifts. Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā[4] was frustrated in two ways, first in an unfortunate love-affair, and then in failing to find her intellectual equals, a defect remedied later by her admission to the Buddhist Order. Her story is a complicated one: she fell in love with a thief as she saw him being led to his execution; she obtained the remand of his sentence and married him; soon after, realising that he intended to steal the jewels that she was wearing, she pushed him over a precipice and he was killed. Although this may be regarded as a case of justifiable homicide, it would have been difficult for her to face a censorious society with such a tangled tale. Perceiving the impropriety of returning home, she joined the Jains. She soon thought that she had outwitted them in debate, and finding that she could learn nothing more from them she left them, and sought to satisfy her intellectual cravings by debate with the Buddhists.

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[1] Therīgāthā, lxxiii.; and *cf.* below, p. 200.
[2] Saṃy. Nik., xxii., § 99 (7).
[3] Therīgāthā, lxxii., and see above p. 174, 176 ff.
[4] Therīgāthā, xlvi.

This was the sect too in which Nanduttarā,[1] after having led a varied religious career, eventually found an outlet for her intellectual needs. Though born a brahmin she was too critical and rational not to be aware of the insufficiency of the many rites at which she assisted.

> " Fire and the moon, the sun and eke the gods
> I once was wont to worship and adore,
> Foregathering on the river banks to go
> Down in the waters for the bathing rites." (Verse 87.)

The penances which she had performed, such as shaving half the head, sleeping on the ground, and fasting until the evening were good enough perhaps for the unenlightened, but they were ceremonies which Nanduttarā's questioning mind divested of all reality. During the intervals between attending to them she seems to have " ministered to this body, spurred by lusts of sense " (verse 89); perhaps as a reaction against superstitions which she early came to distrust. She then joined the Jains, and learnt a good deal from them. She became a renowned speaker, and taking her rose-apple bough she toured about the country. Thus one day she met Mahā-Moggallāna, debated with him, was convinced by his arguments, and on his advice entered the Order of Almswomen.

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[1] *Ibid.*, xlii.

CHAPTER III (*continued*)

THERĪGĀTHĀ. PART II

OF all the unendurable elements in life perhaps the greatest impetus to join the Order came from grief. When all, or most of all that had made life worth the living of it, that had made it acceptable, perhaps unquestioningly, was suddenly snatched away, some sorrowing women went to the Order so as to heal and reintegrate themselves, and to find a new balance, new channels into which to pour their energies.

Amongst these mourning figures who were comforted were Ubbirī,[1] who was consoled by the Master on the death of her little daughter so " that consuming grief for my dead child which poisoned all the life of me is dead," and Paṭācārā's Five Hundred,[2] whose overwhelming grief each on the death of a child, was only restrained when that almswoman reminded them of Impermanence as manifested in death, and of the migration to other births.

> " Lo ask thyself again whence came thy son
> To bide on earth this little breathing-space ?
> By one way come and by another gone,
> As man to die and pass to other births—
> So hither and so hence—why would ye weep ?"

Comfort was found in the thought that this was an application of the law " Where there is no ceasing to be there is no arising." This and many another[3] are denials and assertions which escape down the ages from the serenity of the robust of spirit and in which the frailer now and again find some kind of consolation, some kind of reconciliation to the notion of death.

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[1] Therīgāthā, xxxiii. [2] *Ibid.*, l.

[3] *Cf.* Vaughan, *Silex Scintillans*, " They are all gone into the world of light !"; Shelley, *Adonais*,

> " Peace, peace : he is not dead, he doth not sleep—
> He hath awakened from the dream of life ";

and Anatole France, *Thaïs*, " *mourir, c'est vivre.*"

We cannot but admire the utter selflessness of the mourners who could find balm in such ideas, and yet we have only to look upon Paṭācārā's own story[1] of loss upon loss to know how earnestly she must have spoken those words and how she must have felt them to be pregnant with unfailing powers to heal. She had a weight of losses enough to break any heart and to threaten the most balanced sanity.

> " My children both are gone, and in that bush
> Dead lies my husband ; on one funeral bier
> My mother, father and my brother burn."[2]

By chance she came to where Gotama was preaching, and he comforted her by warning her of the instability of the blood-bond, "O'ertaken by death, for thee blood-bond is no refuge,"[3] and by suggesting that instead of clinging to the love of her relatives she should make free her heart by winning to nirvāna's bliss. In her attempt to do this she experienced that resifting of values necessitated by any mental or emotional crisis, and that remoulding of life consequent upon loss where there has been deep love. She, *mulier deserta*, *dolorosa* and finally *consolatrix*, came out triumphant from the battle with herself, another witness to woman's power of self-conquest and of training the self to tame the self.

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[1] Therīgāthā, xlvii., and *cf.* Dhp. Cmy. on verse 289.

[2] Therīgāthā Cmy. on xlvii.

[3] *Ibid.*, and *cf.* a Jain verse : " Give up clinging to all worldly objects for : ' Neither a father nor a mother, nor a son nor brothers, nor friends nor relatives, nor heaps of wealth are a refuge in the *saṃsāra* that is full of pain. The Law *alone* expounded by the Prince of Jinas, the treasure of happiness, is in this world the refuge of living beings that are tormented by the pain of birth, old age and death." Meyer, *Hindu Tales*, p. 153, London, 1909.

Vāsiṭṭhī's[1] is another case of the same kind. Worn and crazy with grief at the death of a child, she wandered about for three years, until she met the Maśter, when at the sight of him, self-controlled and self-contained, and through his power she was able to regain her normal mind.

> "And then at laśt I saw him as he went
> Within that blessed city, Mithilā;
> Great tamer of untamed hearts, yea Him,
> The very Buddha, Banisher of fear."

There was also poor Kisā-Gotamī,[2] one of the mośt pathetic figures in Buddhiśt literature. Her śtory, given below,[3] shows that by realising the domination of Impermanence throughout the whole fabric of the universe she adapted herself to the common lot and bowed to necessity.

Two women, both called Sāmā,[4] left the world for a new way of living, the old having become insupportable to them through the death of their mutual friend Sāmāvatī.

None of the Therīs is recorded to have entered the Order to banish grief caused solely by the death of her husband. One man, Harita, joined on account of the anguish caused by the death of his wife.[5]

To these women attempting to escape from fear, grief, loneliness and failure, life in the Order muśt have appeared at firśt to be but a second-beśt. It was sought by them primarily as an opiate, and not on its own account. But while opiates are second-beśt, when they have functioned, in place of the saving pause which they afford there is life and growth and meaning. The Order is not what these women with love of people and kinsfolk and the world hitherto absorbing their intereśts would have chosen had their circumśtances been different, but as things were for them, "Better the safe, sure life of religion."[1] Once having entered the Order they all reaped the consolations of religion, sharpened their life to command its course, and so leading a life of the mind, came to be invulnerable to those shafts of grief and blows of fortune with which existence in the world is inextricably entangled.

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[1] Therīgāthā, li. [2] *Ibid.*, lxiii. [3] See below, p. 304 ff.
[4] Therīgāthā, xxviii., xxix. [5] Theragāthā, xxix.

Nor would they feel themselves irrevocably cut off from their homes, for the Order did not demand adherence until death;[2] it was possible for members to secede. No almswoman was forced to remain in it against her will. Nor was it an inhuman institution. There is nothing to show that to the almswomen the Order had the flavour of a prison. On the contrary, being unenclosed, there were opportunities for association with their relatives and friends among the laity.

It is true that the standard of values was altered. Attachment to kin was no longer regarded as of such importance as the attainment of nirvāna, the state which once reached bestowed a peace which nothing could disturb. The inner life was put before the demands made by externals. Its activity did not fail, for although there is not from the almswomen a great body of literature as there is from the women saints and mystics of the West, there is this collection of verses, of unique interest and value. More might have survived had writing material been more accessible at the time at which they are supposed to have been uttered, and had the monk-editors of the texts been as much interested in the doings of women as they were in their own. Each verse is the sincere expression of an attitude of mind to the fundamental laws thought to be ruling the universe, and represents the discovery by a particular mind of a harmony with what is other than itself, no less than with that which is itself.

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[1] *Ibid.*, verse 788.

[2] See above, p. 158.

Labour and attainment went hand in hand.[1] Each woman stands out serene and strong as a testimony to the fact that lives need not be swayed and devastated by the passions and the emotions, but that the self can be trained to govern the mind, the self to tame the self.[2] From the records of each, in addition, it is evident that the two constituents of human experience, will, upon which Gotama laid so much emphasis; and sorrow, upon which he is said to have laid so much emphasis, can be met by the firm resolve to exercise the first, and hence to proceed on the Way (*magga*) to Salvation; and by self-mastery to reject the intrusion of the second into one's own sphere. This is the key to conquest, and to *sukha* (prosperity, good fortune), "Both in the past and to-day, almsmen, I have consistently preached Ill and the ending of Ill (*dukkhañ-c'eva . . . dukkhassa ca nirodhaṃ*)."[3] The discipline was hard. To persevere in it one must be strong in every way. As Sāriputta explained to Tissa, "Tissa, the life of an almsman is a hard life; when he would like what is warm he gets what is cold, when he would like what is cold he gets what is warm; those who become almsmen live a wearisome life and you are delicate."[4] And the delicately reared found it hard "to arrive happily at happiness. A recluse's duties involve bodily fatigues."[5] They also involved the necessity for mental vigour, nourished largely by a lively desire for the truth, for "hard are the precepts and the holy life."[6] Though life in the Order might provide a comfortable *milieu* for many women after the trials and tribulations they had suffered in the world, in no other sense was it to be regarded as a relaxation.

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[1] Therīgāthā, verse 513.

[2] *Cf.* Therīgāthā, verse 509, and Dhp., verse 379.

[3] Majjhima, i., 140; *cf. ibid.*, i., 431.

[4] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 75, *cf. ibid.*, on verses 249-250, where Tissa complains of these occurrences and of others.

[5] Theragāthā Cmy. on ccxliii., and *cf.* above, p. 150.

[6] Therīgāthā, verse 463.

Opposed in temperament to the women who regarded entry into the Order as a blessing in disguise are those who thought of it as a positive blessing. At least eighteen cases might be adduced of those who held the latter view.[1] They thought of it as securing the means of self-realisation and a larger and fuller field for mental activity, more vital than that of the domestic circle. Life for self is what they burned for, rather than a life, hampered by cares, for others. Nor were such women filled by missionary zeal or drawn on by any theories concerning the advantages of a community over a home life. They were animated solely by the desire for a real search for enlightenment, for it was the religious life as such that they recognised to be their genuine vocation. They did not seek it as an escape from an existence which they could no longer endure; but knew it to be the life that they would prefer above all others to lead, the life for which, as they would express it, their destiny was ripe. Not emotion centering in the past drove them forth from the home to the homeless way, but the religious call, clarion with the hope of winning a treasure more glorious than any to be gained in the turmoil of worldly life. And like the call of the sea the religious call may not be denied. The price that it demands is renunciation, but renunciation is looked upon as a privilege where Freedom, Insight, Peace are to be the gains. This is the type of the true ascetic, eager to give up what may lawfully be enjoyed. The other temperament adopts asceticism as a *pis-aller*, for had circumstances been different the harvest of worldly goods would not have been supplanted, but would have sufficed. Love of earthly things until these failed held some women back, love towards the

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[1] *Ibid.*, i., ii., iii., xvi., xvii., xxiii., xxiv., xxv., xxxi., xxxiv., xxxv., xxxvi., xliv., liii., liv., lviii., lxii., lxvii.

Dhamma urged others forward. What could they do but follow after if they

> "Saw that Norm, the Pure, Passionless,
> Track to Nirvāna, past decease and birth?"[1]

Sumedhā[2] with her aversion from the pleasures of the senses, but with a definite devotion to religion, may be looked upon as a bridge, a link between the women who were impelled into the Order by a *vis a tergo* of unendurable circumstances, welcoming it at first simply as an escape from these, and those who felt an undeniable pull towards the religious life. She is the only almswoman who is represented as looking upon entry both as an escape and as her real vocation,

> "All my heart's love is to Nirvāna given . . .
> What truck have I, then, with the empty life
> Of sense, that giveth little, slayeth much?
> Bitter as serpent's poison are desires
> Of sense, whereafter youthful fools do yearn." (Verses 450, 451).

She knew that if she had the chance she could crush age and death utterly (verse 493), and that in place of the sharp and bitter ills, the ferment and enmity engendered by the senses, "The Nectar of the Norm is here." "Emancipation waits," for "there is, that groweth never old" which is

> This never-ageing, never-dying path. . . . (Verse 512.)
> And to-day, e'en now 'tis to be won.
> But only by a life that's utterly
> Surrendered in devotion. (Verse 513.)

She works out in her plea to join the Order a balance between the evils of the senses, and the fruits of a life of religion. As to these she is well-informed, and gives a much more detailed account of the possible branches of Insight to be mastered than do any of the other Therīs. It is said that she herself realised the six branches of Insight (*abhiññā*).[3]

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[1] *Ibid.*, verse 97.

[2] *Ibid.*, lxxiii.

[3] *Ibid.*, verse 516.

There are two distinct lines of development among the women who truly came to feel the desire to leave the world. There are on the one hand eleven[1] who are recorded to have heard the preaching and become first lay-disciples, three of them becoming stream-entrants, but joining the Order later, usually after having heard a discourse by Gotama or by some other preacher, famous or obscure. On the other hand there were those twenty-seven,[2] whose destiny was fully ripe, as it is so often said, and of whom it is not recorded that they passed through the intermediary stage of being first a lay-believer, but who on believing straightway joined the Order. However far they had progressed on the paths, the homeless life appeared to them to be the only safe means of persisting in the highest state. Thus Sumanā[3] while still in the world looking after her grandmother became established in the Precepts and the Refuges. When the grandmother had died Sumanā heard the Master preach again, and attained the fruit of the Path of No-Return, the third of the paths to arahanship, and then asked to be ordained. Anopamā[4] too was established in the Third Path before she entered the Order, a step that she took almost immediately afterwards.

But it did not necessarily need the teaching of the greatest of all to awaken women's faith, and although twenty women are recorded to have been incited to join by the words of Gotama himself, others were finally drawn to the Order, not by his teaching but by that of some famous woman-preacher.

Outstanding amongst these is Paṭācārā, who was deeply versed in the Vinaya, and also deeply versed in human suffering. She was responsible not only for bringing to the Order the Five Hundred women,[1] each of whom was broken by the loss of a child, but also for consoling them and removing the hidden shaft from their hearts. She is also said to have converted a group of thirty women[2] to the faith by her preaching. When they were reflecting on the arahanship that they had attained largely through her exhortations to carry out the Buddha's will, exulting

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[1] *Ibid.*, i., xxxii., xxxiv., xxxv., xxxvi., xxxix., xliv., lxv., lxx., lxxi., lxxiii.

[2] *Ibid.*, ii., iii., iv.-x., xiii., xiv., xv., xvi., xviii., xxiii., xxiv., xxx., xxxi., xl., xliii., xlviii., xlix., l., liii., liv., lvii., lviii., lxii., lxvii.

[3] *Ibid.*, xvi.

[4] *Ibid.*, liv.

> " And rising to their feet they hailed her blest:
> Fulfillèd is thy will . . .
> Chieftain unconquered in celestial wars,
> We place thee as our Chief, and so shall live."

These sentiments are similar to those expressed by Uttarā,[3] another of her converts. It is the fulfilment of *her* will in which they rejoice, and only incidentally in the fulfilment of Gotama's. It is quite possible that he was but a name to them, whereas they were in the presence of the wise and compassionate Paṭācārā herself, enthralled by her vibrant sympathy and her own enthusiasm for the Dhamma. She is also said by her admonitions to have inspired Uttamā[4] to attain the climax of insight. She may have had a special interest in her, for it was after Uttamā had heard Paṭācārā preach on a former occasion that she joined the Order. Such an incident gives a fleeting glimpse of the possibility of preachers following the fates of members of their flocks and not relaxing their efforts until they had safely established them on the Eightfold Way, leading to utmost good (verse 171). The aptness with which Uttamā refers to her teacher as

> " That noble Bhikkhunī
> Who was my foster-mother in the faith." (Verse 43.)

is the expression of enduring gratitude on the part of the disciple.

Candā[5] was deeply touched by the kindness of

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[1] *Ibid.*, l.
[2] *Ibid.*, xlviii.
[3] *Ibid.*, lviii.
[4] *Ibid.*, xxx.
[5] *Ibid.*, xlix.

Paṭācārā and the other almswomen with her and by their ministrations to her physical wants, when bereft of all her kinsfolk, a beggar for seven years, and starving, she happened to come upon them. They refreshed her in spirit and body, and she was able to listen with such attention and delight to Paṭācārā's discourse after the meal, that she renounced the world. Paṭācārā ordained her and continued to instruct her. Candā found so "wise and clear our Lady's homily," that she soon acquired the Threefold Wisdom, and her heart was purified from the deadly drugs.

The number of women recorded to have left the world under Mahāpajāpatī may be reckoned as six.[1] In addition three were ordained by her, two, Cittā and Mettikā[2] after having heard the Master preach; and Little Sturdy[3] who had become a lay-believer after having also heard him. When later she heard Mahāpajāpatī, the wish arose in her to leave the world, and it was only the opposition of her husband that prevented her from doing so at once. She is the only one whose wish is definitely attributed to hearing Mahāpajāpatī, but it may be reasonably assumed that those who left the world under her had been inspired by her. Her nurse renounced the world when her mistress did.[4] None of these address her in the warm terms of praise and affection, such as Paṭācārā's converts used of their teacher. But then Mahāpajāpatī was not such a brilliant speaker, nor was she endowed either by nature or by training with the marvellous powers of sympathy and consolation which distinguished her colleague. She had had to mourn a head grown gray, but had not known the anguish of grief and the wild regret at the dying of youth, the very thing for which Paṭācārā's converts sought comfort. Women in trouble are not recorded to have gone to Mahāpajāpatī. Her converts consisted of young girls, students and the daughters of the wealthy who feared the curse of their wealth. All were advanced spiritually before they heard Mahāpajāpatī; she as it were gave the finishing touches to a process which would have fulfilled itself in one way or another; nothing went out of her to restore the ingredients of life to women whom it had shattered and bruised. And if the teachers had all been similar in their method of presenting the Dhamma, the diversity and probably the number of the entrants would have been lessened.

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[1] *Ibid.*, ii., iii., xxxiii., lvi., lxx., lxxi.

[2] *Ibid.*, xxiii., xxiv.

[3] *Ibid.*, i.

[4] *Ibid.*, xxxviii.

Dhammadinnā,[1] one of the most famous of the women preachers,[2] was instrumental in leading two women to arahanship. One, Sukkā,[3] who herself later became a great preacher, found faith in the Master in her own home when she was quite young, and became a lay-disciple. Later she heard Dhammadinnā preach, was thrilled with emotion, and renounced the world under her, not long after attaining arahanship. The other woman, Mahāpajāpatī's nurse,[4] had renounced the world twenty-five years before she arrived at the "blessedness of calm serenity."[5] Not for one moment of that time could she find any peace of mind. It was only when she "who was my fostermother in the faith,"[6] namely Dhammadinnā, drew near to the poor almswoman and taught her the Norm, like Paṭācārā laying stress on Impermanence, that she found that she was able to begin to meditate, and so acquired the Six Powers of Intuition.

These are the women who stand out specially as preachers and as makers of converts, and hence as saviours showing the way to happiness. And the result of their work was remarkable. It was augmented by that of others, a few of whom are recorded in the Therīgāthā each to have drawn in a new recruit.

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[1] *Ibid.*, xii.

[2] *Ibid.*, xxxiv., see below, p. 254.

[3] Therīgāthā, xxxiv.

[4] *Ibid.*, xxxviii.

[5] *Ibid.*, verse 67.

[6] *Cf. ibid.*, verse 43.

Jinadattā, to whom no verse is ascribed, has already been mentioned as the Therī under whom Isidāsī took Orders.[1] Though she did not actually convert her, she probably helped her to surmount her father's opposition to the notion of her renouncing the world. Vāsiṭṭhī[2] advised Sundarī's father to go to Gotama for comfort, and so led to his conversion. And lastly there was Khemā,[3] to whom Vijayā acted as companion whilst they were still both of the laity. But her position is doubtful. All that is really known of her share in Vijayā's conversion is that Vijayā in her verse says " then to a bhikkhunī I came and asked full many a question of my doubts."[4] It is the commentator who identifies this bhikkhunī with Khemā. Perhaps the name matters little in face of the more important fact that it was a woman who taught Vijayā " the Norm so as to agitate her mind concerning rebirth, and to make her seek comfort in the system."[5]

All this conversion of women by women is part of the weighty contribution that they made to the Buddhist religion. As teachers they exhibit a variety of attracting forces, consequent upon their individual characters and histories. But whatever aspect of the system made a greater appeal to each one of them, and through her to her listeners as she emphasised her particular point, whether it were, for example, impermanence,[6] including the transitory nature of the self,[7] the surrender to spiritual calm,[8] which is the carrying out of the Buddha's will, fundamentally they all taught the same thing. The basic theme of their homilies was development. The notion of the Wayfaring, through becoming (*bhava*) to advance through life-span (*āyu*) after life-span to something better and happier than had been experienced before, was always present in the teaching of each one, though sometimes less stressed as a whole than in particular aspects.

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[1] *Ibid.*, lxxii., see above, p. 177 ff.

[2] Therīgāthā Cmy. on lxix., and see above, p. 176.

[3] Therīgāthā Cmy. on lii.

[4] *Ibid.*, verse 170.

[5] *Ibid.*, Cmy. on lvii.

[6] *Ibid.*, l.

[7] *Ibid.*, xxx., xxxviii.

[8] *Ibid.*, xlvi., lviii.

The poetesses to whom these verses are attributed steeped themselves in this teaching, and put forth every effort to follow it. Hence with few exceptions it is said that the moment of the attainment of arahanship occurred not long after their entry into the Order. But some were not so mature in wisdom and had to wait longer for the supreme crown of their search. Amongst these latter are Sāmā,[1] who on the loss of her great friend joined the Order, but she was too much distraught by grief to grasp the Āriyan Way until she heard Ānanda preaching, and on the seventh day after this she attained arahanship. Anopamā[2] and Subhā, the goldsmith's daughter,[3] realised arahanship on the seventh and eighth days respectively after admission to the Order.

Guttā[4] had no immediate results for her efforts. It is not said how long she waited until she won arahanship, but her heart long persisted in running after external interests and this destroyed concentration. Sihā[5] also was unable to prevent her mind from running after objects of external charm and

> " So did I fare for seven weary years,
> In lean and sallow mis'ry of unrest." (Verse 79.)

During these years she seems to have experienced something corresponding to the " interior desolation"[6] of mystics.

Mittakālī[7] also for seven years after she entered the Order was liable to a fondness for gifts and honours. After all this time it is said that she became anxious, and later won arahanship.

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[1] *Ibid.*, xxviii.
[2] *Ibid.*, Cmy. on liv.
[3] *Ibid.*, lxx.
[4] *Ibid.*, lvi.
[5] *Ibid.*, xl.
[6] Sister Mary Madeleva, *Pearl: A Study in Spiritual Dryness*, London, 1925, p. 27, *passim*.
[7] Therīgāthā, xliii.

It needed even more determination on the part of the other Sāmā[1] who entered when her great friend died, and of Mahāpajāpatī's nurse,[2] for both of these had to strive for twenty-five years before craving was withered and the deadly Drugs purged away.

Cittā[3] and Mettikā,[4] although each entered the Order when she had reached to years of discretion, could not win to arahanship until old age. Their youthful spring gone, their spiritual ascent was as arduous as their ascent to the tops of the mountains, where, though tottering and weak, they climbed, seeking for liberty.

Among these women who took upon themselves full membership of the Order there could have been few who did so having no idea, no hope, glowing within the breast "like a lamp in a pitcher"[5] of some of the fruits of meditation which they might rightfully and reasonably hope to garner. Some were able to say with Thaïs,[6] "*Je suis lasse de tout ce que je connais*," but only up to a point were they able to continue with her, "*je vais chercher l'inconnu*," for even if they did not know the particular form in which their arahanship would be conveyed to them, they all had a fairly clear notion that "Emancipation waits."[7] Just as "the End of Living or Rebirths, *e.g.*, forms almost a ground-wave to be discerned in the majority of the Psalms"[8] as a *result* of contemplation, so it offers the hope of being ultimately won *by* contemplation, and it has its roots in the prevalent religious thought of India.

The beginning of the search for emancipation was sometimes, but not always, set going by thinking of analogies drawn from real life. Thus Little Sturdy[1] made the devouring flame of fire a basis for rapt meditation on the utter impermanence of all things: Abhirūpa-Nandā[2] and Khemā[3] were presented with the visions of the gradual decay of a beautiful woman: Dhammā's[4] fall brought home to her the frailty and misery besetting this poor mortal frame; and Dantikā[5] was inspired by the sight of a great elephant in complete subjection to a man, "the untamed tamed," to tame and train and order her own heart (*citta*).

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[1] *Ibid.*, xxix., and *cf.* Theragāthā, cclx. Ānanda also had to wait for twenty-five years before he attained arahanship.

[2] Therīgāthā, xxxviii.

[3] *Ibid.*, xxiii.

[4] *Ibid.*, xxiv.

[5] Jātaka Cmy. on 12.

[6] Anatole France, *Thaïs*, Collection bleue, p. 199.

[7] Therīgāthā, verse 506.

[8] *Psalms of the Sisters*, intr., p. xxxvi.

But however the search was begun—either in one of these ways or in the more refined manner of taking some subject for meditation—its end, the moment of Insight, was a purely intellectual discovery. It was not accompanied by sounds or by visions. The absence of the former may be accounted for partly by the fact that music had no function in the Order, either as a pastime, or as an aid to meditation. A low chanting would be all the music that these women would hear.[6] Moreover all visual impressions were intended to be ignored, for they were regarded as not in any way potent to clarify the unseen, but on the contrary decidedly to obscure it. The rending of the gloom, the thick gloom of ignorance,[7] is the only visual imagery that is noticed. Tactile imagery is equally non-existent, with one exception. And there, in Sujātā's cry, "my spirit touched the Norm Immaculate,"[8] all physical content seems long since to have been abstracted from the sense of touch.

The fervour of these first women would rivet their attention on the subject of their meditation, and not let it be captivated by the natural beauties around them. The burning colours in the sky at sunset, the resilient greens of the forests and the dark shadows, the great flowering trees and the brilliant-hued birds, all passed unnoticed. The Therīgāthā, as compared with the Theragāthā, portray an apparent insensibility to nature. In the former but few references are made to it, while in the latter there are many. But this was not because women were normally less impressionable to natural phenomena than men, for we hear now and again of a woman who loved nature,[1] but it was because in meditation they concentrated more intensely than men, and shut away all distracting sights and sounds by an effort of the will, determined to sunder the bonds that dragged them backward to the hither shore.[2] In order to reach the goal these women managed to restrain the senses, and for this reason the moment of attainment and its expression (*aññā*) are free from all sensory images.

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[1] Therīgāthā, i. [2] *Ibid.*, xix. [3] *Ibid.*, lii.

[4] *Ibid.*, xvii. [5] *Ibid.*, xxxii.

[6] Almsmen were allowed to intone the Dhamma instead of singing it with the abrupt transition of song-singing. CV. v., 3, 1.

[7] Therīgāthā, iii., xxx., xxxv., xxxvi., xlviii., lii., lvii., lviii., lix., lx., lxi., lxiv.

[8] *Ibid.*, verse 149. *Cf.* Theragāthā, verse 212, "touch (*phusāhi*) . . . the Way."

The actual form in which arahanship was conveyed to each one was to a large extent congruent with her circumstances before entering the Order. If, for example, the conditions of her life had been difficult and irksome, her finding of Nirvāna would be negatively presented as Freedom, Comfort, End of Becoming, End of Craving, or as Rest. If, on the other hand, she had entered because she knew that, whatever were her circumstances, she was ripe to lead the religious life, Nirvāna would be presented to her positively as Light, Happiness, Insight, Peace or Self-mastery.

Some of the women, whether they discerned it or not, were near the end of their journey "onward in the Path"[3] towards arahanship before they adopted the homeless life. Surprise at the swiftness with which they actually reached it must have swooped down upon some of those who, in their disgust at the world, turned to homelessness; while a high expectation of obtaining a thorough grasp of the Dhamma, "that life's elixir, once won, never lost,"[1] must have animated those who went forth into homelessness "through call of faith,"[2] as Mittakālī puts it. For all, not excepting even Mittakālī who neglected "the path of insight,"[3] and "turned from highest good to follow baser ends,"[4] felt the force of the Dhamma, to them relentless in its appeal, loaded with a meaning that nothing could gainsay. Like their own hill-tops rising suddenly out of the plains, these Therīs, far higher spiritually than the rank and file who surrounded them, were ardent to develop to the utmost their inheritance of the religious and philosophical temperament which belongs to the peoples of India; the way in which they knew beyond all doubt that it was absolutely appropriate for them to do this was the Way taught by Gotama. They felt the intensity of their own spiritual demands, drowning all sensual and material concerns; and in surrendering in devotion to the "Ambrosial Path"[5] went out to meet their strongest desires.

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[1] Theragāthā Cmy. on xiii.

[2] Therīgāthā, lvi.

[3] *Ibid.*, verse 61, *cf.* Appendix, No. 2.

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[1] Therīgāthā, verse 55.
[2] *Ibid.*, xliii.
[3] *Ibid.*, verse 93.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*, verse 513.

CHAPTER IV

Life in the Order. Part I

" Poverty, chastity and obedience."—Food given in alms.—Robes.—Bathing.—Manual and domestic work.—Other regulations for simple life.—Hospitality from almspeople.—Writing and learning.—Quarrels among almswomen.—Complaints from almswomen.

AFTER this survey of some of the motives and aspirations which animated the women who became Therīs and arahans, and whose experiences, sometimes worldly and sometimes spiritual, are recorded in the Therīgāthā and the Commentary, an attempt must be made to investigate the common conditions of the daily life to which all almswomen alike were submitted, and the kind of atmosphere in which they lived.

It was an atmosphere capable of promoting remarkable spiritual achievement, eliciting it sometimes from unexpected sources; it was an atmosphere capable of maintaining good, steady and idealistic workers; and it was an atmosphere capable of enduring the presence of some totally unworthy members, women who perhaps had entered during some crisis in their lives, but who were unfit to sustain in peace and quiet the rigours of monastic life.

Once the Order of Almswomen was established, any woman who thought of joining had herself to decide whether she should try to do so or not. If dependent on father or husband or, to a lesser degree, on son, she would have to determine to present her wishes to him, and if necessary to coax him to fall in with them, in order to gain his consent. If independent, by herself she would have to muster the resolution to put the idea of entry into practice, sometimes with a little encouragement from a member of the Order and sometimes without. It is recorded that Sāriputta invited Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā to join the Order[1] as a kind of bribe to her to learn the answer to the question "What is one?" (*'ekaṃ nāma kiṃ?*). "Very well," she answered, "admit me to the Order." She was a free lance. Having severed all connection with her home, she was therefore not under the obligation of seeking the permission of any guardian. In addition to the cases given in the Therīgāthā Commentary, of women who, destitute of husband or relations, made up their minds to enter the Order, there is also the story of the wife who found that her husband and her son had taken on the monastic life. Then "of her own accord she went to the Community of Almswomen and retired from the world."[2] Woman at long last was beginning to realise that she, equally with her men-folk has will-power, is a willer, and that in certain circumstances she must exert this power which is within her to gain admission to the Order, if that is what she wants.

Thus, as a general rule, the initiative lay with the entrant. Normally the relatives did not use the Order as a means of disposing of unwanted girls, nor was any direct appeal made by the almspeople to women to join them. Their course was left to them to determine, and it was left open. No sermons were addressed specially to them, and no literature exists the obvious purpose of which was to persuade girls to become almswomen. But neither was there any markedly deterring influence at work in the society of the day. Religion was understood in India, and the intellectual unrest of the era immediately preceding the rise of Buddhism, and continuing unimpaired for many years, had opened various religious ventures to women. The Jains were particularly progressive in this respect. To some extent they had accustomed the world to the institution of *religieuses* as an honourable portion of the community. No odium was attached to women who embraced the religious life. Almswomen were not regarded as slothful, hysterical, or dissolute characters, until some particular almswoman gave actual cause for the application of these epithets. The life in the Order was known to be too hard to permit of the survival of such characters. It was hard, it required both physical health and the power of mental application, and it had earnestness and mindfulness amongst its ideals. Entrants were not likely to be allowed to forget the Noble Eightfold Way; they were presumably taught that "zeal is the way to nirvāna"[1] and "great grows the glory of him who is zealous in meditation . . . whose life is calm and righteous and full of vigour."[2] It may fairly be claimed that by the time that the Buddhist Order of Almswomen was fully established and its reputation was widely known, the pity of women joining did not strike people so much as the sense of their doing so. If some homes were broken up or saddened by the departure of the mother or the daughter, logically the women could not be blamed, for the greater equality accorded them included greater equality of opportunity. That was the theory, but in practice the men had the whip-hand. They could, and sometimes did, withhold their permission, and their obedient wives acquiesced.

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[1] Therīgāthā Cmy. on xlvi.; Dhp. Cmy. on verses 102-103.

[2] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 209-211.

When female novices wished to receive the Upasampadā ordination, they had to ask for it, as has been shown,[3] from both the Sanghas. Only one kind of exception to this custom was known, and that was when Gotama himself ordained an entrant by saying "Come," calling the entrant by name. This kind of ordination is recorded of one woman, Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā, the ex-Jain.

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[1] Dhp., 21.

[2] Dhp., 24.

[3] See above, p. 138 ff.

> "'Come, Bhaddā!' the Master said!
> Thereby to me was ordination given."[1]

But instances of the favour of this direct ordination were exceptional. In ordinary cases the examination by the Sanghas had to be gone through. If no objections were raised by them, initiation was granted to the applicants. They were not required to utter any formulæ, nor were they required to make any formal vows of poverty, chastity or obedience, either then or when they first gained admission as novices; and although these rules are as essentially features of Eastern monachism as they are of Western, the entrants into the Buddhist Sangha did not and do not definitely bind themselves by vows to observe these major rules.

In spite of the absence of vows of adherence, in spite of there being no declaration of acceptance of poverty, chastity and obedience, yet these ideas, summed up in the ten precepts, impregnated the Orders. Poverty was manifested in the possession of only eight belongings (the three robes, the alms-bowl, razor, needle,[2] girdle and water-strainer),[3] all of them the bare necessities of livelihood, but known by entrants to be henceforth their only legitimate belongings. Chastity was inculcated by the major precepts of morality, and obedience by the discipline of the Order; for if an almswoman could not obey the precepts she was punished.

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[1] Therīgāthā, xlvi.

[2] Jain recluses must not possess a needle, or anything made of metal. Sinclair Stevenson, *Heart of Jainism*, 1915, p. 226.

[3] In Colombo at the present day the lay-women (upāsikās) nominally observe the ten precepts; but they do not all eschew the use of money. Some go about collecting for temples and other Buddhist causes, and substitute a special vow to practise loving-kindness for the precept about money, which they omit.

It would be known by any woman who wished to join the Order that she must sever the customary conjugal and parental relationships, and go in free from all the enslaving bonds of the worldly life. It is recorded of several women that before they joined the Order[1] they made provision for the guardianship of their children, since they could not take them with them. Perhaps this knowledge of what must have constituted for Indian women one of the most tearing wrenches of all was mitigated by the overwhelming attraction of the new-found way of living. If an entrant had a husband she knew that henceforth her life was to be celibate.[2] Possibly her anticipation of virtual widowhood was recompensed by a sense of release-to-be, both from the here and now, and from becoming again; a sense so strong that any lingering regrets were hastily smothered by a flying hope that husbands might be as much of a hindrance to women, as women were to men who were leading the higher life.[3] This was the view shared by Bhaddā Kāpilānī and Pippali, better known as Mahā-Kassapa, her husband. They agreed to part at the cross-roads—that he should go right and she left, each to their respective Sanghas. She was at least treated with greater respect than was Queen Sīlavī,[4] whose husband when wishing to become an ascetic thought to himself, "A wife is the ascetic's bane." They did not consult together, for (by the time of writing the Jātakas) it was regarded as the man's prerogative to do as he liked. But though he tried to dissuade her from following him, he could not; neither could she dissuade him from becoming an ascetic. He had to scheme and plot to escape from her, until at last he succeeded.

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[1] Therīgāthā, xviii., xliv., lxii., lxviii.

[2] So in Ceylon at the present day, the nuns observe the precept of celibacy, which those who observe only five precepts sometimes substitute for the third of the five sīlas.

[3] *Cf.* Theragāthā, cclxi.

[4] Jātaka, 539.

Then she adopted the ascetic life of a *ṛshi*, driven to it by the callousness of her husband.

The possibility of voluntarily debarring oneself from husband (or wife) and children for life, and leading not a solitary, but a cenobitic existence, was a new outlook or almost new. It presents a landmark of the greatest importance in the history of culture.[1] The silence of the Buddhist books on the question of *sati* (or widow-burning) is itself sufficient to justify the view that the custom was of extreme rarity at the time both of the rise of Buddhism and of the Buddhist canon. Equally there is no reference to the symbolical act of self-immolation on the husband's funeral pyre. The notion is thus suggested that a wife was not necessarily expected to remain with her husband during his whole life, serving him and effacing herself entirely. As women came to be regarded as individuals instead of as adjuncts, a life of comparative freedom for them made its way into the social organisation. Hence the admission of married women cast no slur on the relatives who remained in the world, and no opprobrium was thrown on the women themselves as it came to be regarded as not extraordinary for them to wish to enter.

In the Buddhist Order the renunciation expected of the members was not so severe in nature as the self-imposed type practised by the solitary ascetics. The women felt themselves capable of rising to the demands it made of them—demands, if not for bitter austerities, yet constantly for self-control. The self, that " bundle of apperceptions,"[2] and who could tell?—perhaps a " transcendental unity of apperception "[3] was to be mastered, but not atrophied—for how then would weeping have been permitted;[1] while owing to the allowance of the eight belongings the deep roots of the possessive instinct were not ignored? The instinct of sex was to be suppressed, and other bodily appetites carefully regulated, but the flesh was not otherwise to be subdued and certainly not mortified. Nor did the communal life, as it was worked out by the Buddhists, wholly ignore the world. The herd-instinct could still be directed towards the Community of Almsmen and Almswomen; and in this case, further, for the Sanghas were not expected to live, move and have their being in complete isolation from the laity, the world. Monastic life, either from excess of routine, or from deficiency of routine, is apt to produce a feeling of lassitude and meaninglessness among its members. That such psychological states do not appear to have been frequent in the Buddhist Order may in part be attributed to a healthy mingling with the laity: and this was perhaps for many years the salvation of Buddhist monachism.

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[1] The beginnings of Monasticism in India appear to have taken their rise with the Jains and the Buddhists. In Egypt the notion may have arisen about the same date. See Flinders Petrie, *Personal Religion in Egypt before Christianity*, p. 59, where he says " in Egyptian writings before 600 B.C. there is no trace of the ascetic ideal."

[2] Hume.

[3] Kant.

If asceticism were unprofitable, renunciation could afford to be modified. And since, according to Gotama's belief, renunciation in itself did not represent the ultimate heights to which man could attain, but was merely a valuable training, in that it was an aid to "cherishing, both in public and in private, that noble and saving faith which leads to the complete destruction of the sorrow of him who acts according to it,"[2] it was never emphasised so much as the effort to grasp and cleave to the Dhamma. The advantage of entering the Order was that there the material side of life and the distraction of a life open to the ceaseless demands of others were reduced to the minimum in order that this might be accomplished. The almspeople were to a large extent freed from the wear and tear of daily mundane existence, with its constant economic problems to be solved, decisions to be made, and material anxieties to be faced. For in making this escape they were by no means entirely thrown back upon their own resources. The laity were perpetually in the background of monastic life, reliable in their ardour and ability to support the almspeople, and staunch in their faithful attendance to the physical needs of this parasitic growth.

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[1] V., iv., p. 277.

[2] Mhp., ch. i., § 11.

The physical needs were the daily needs, for the poverty of the members of the Order precluded them from having the means to buy the wherewithal of life, and hence necessitated their begging for their sustenance.

Every day the almswomen went on the alms-round to the lay-people,[1] taking their almsbowl with them and returning with the food they had collected. References to this daily round are scattered all through Pāli literature. In illustration a few examples have been selected from the Therīgāthā Commentary. Sukkā[2] one day went into Rājagaha for alms with five hundred almswomen. And Cālā[3] after her round and her meal went into the Dark Wood. Selā,[4] the Āḷavite Sister, dressed herself early and, taking her bowl and robe, entered Sāvatthi for alms.

The laypeople acquired merit by conferring alms, as the Yakkha declares in the cases of Sukkā and Vīrā:[5]

> " O surely plenteous merit hath he wrought,
> That layman wise who Sukkā's wants supplied—
> Sukkā, who from all bonds is wholly free."

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[1] My Burmese informant tells me that nowadays in Burma the nuns usually go round begging once a week on the eve of the sabbath, and the people offer them pice, rice, dried fish and vegetables. They keep the food-stuffs only for one week. Some of those who have good supporters do not go out begging for they are not doomed to beg by the Law.

[2] Therīgāthā Cmy. on xxxiv.

[3] *Ibid.* on lix.

[4] *Ibid.* on Psalms 1-10 in the Appendix.

[5] Saṃy. Nik., x., § 10 (2), § 11. And see below, p. 315 ff.

Besides the alms given on the alms-round evidently some food was given to special individuals and some to the Sangha as a whole.[1] If there was too much, the portion given to special individuals could be handed over to the Chapter of Almsmen, as could also be done with food which had been stored up before it was presented to the Chapter. The almsmen on their side were allowed to present extra food obtained in these ways to the Chapter of Almswomen.

The daily meal was taken in common, and was taken before midday.[2] After this time almspeople were not allowed to eat. At the meal it was decreed that the "senior eight almswomen shall take their seats according to precedence and the rest as they happen to come in," but nowhere else was there to be "right to seats by priority."[3] No hierarchy besides that of Elders and Novices was known in the Buddhist Sanghas. A layman called Sāḷha,[4] who had been overseeing the repairs to the buildings in a certain vihāra belonging to the almswomen, on one occasion invited them to take a meal at his house. He divided them by age, seating all the older ones together, and all the younger ones together. Such a custom would not have been observed in the vihāra, but when the almspeople were with the laity they were expected out of politeness to them, no less than from diplomatic reasons, to submit to their requests.

There were also various rules for eating. These were chiefly concerned with the almsmen's attitude towards the almswomen. An almsman committed a pācittiya offence if he knowingly partook of almsfood acquired by the intervention of an almswoman unless previous preparation had already been made in the house.[1] He fell into a blameworthy offence, one that had to be confessed, if he accepted food from the hands of an almswoman who had been on her alms-round.[2] This rule was quite likely the outcome of the behaviour of a greedy almsman; asked by an almswoman whether he would accept some of her alms, for three days running he took all that she had. A householder found her in a fainting condition, tottering along the road. She told him her story, and he took her to his house in his chariot. The almsmen did not escape his annoyance with them for permitting such behaviour, for he complained, saying, "How can the almsmen accept the things of the world from the hand of an almswoman? The women obtain them with difficulty." The virtuous almsmen heard that this chivalrous champion of the women was displeased, and told Gotama, who made such conduct into a matter to be confessed.[3]

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[1] CV., x., 15, 1.

[2] This rule of eating before 12 noon still obtains in Burma, and in Ceylon. In the Kandy vihāra it occupies the half-hour from 11.10 to 11.40 a.m.; and here the nuns also have breakfast at 7 o'clock.

[3] CV., x., 18.

[4] V., iv., p. 211.

Almswomen on their side were to show their respect for the almsmen by standing aside and not pressing forward to give directions, if they happened to be at a layman's house to which any almsman had been invited for a meal.[4] No almswoman should stand nearer than two and a half cubits to an almsman when eating in community, on pain of committing a pācittiya offence.[5]

In the Order the minimum of importance was attached to domestic work. Labour was not considered, as it was by the Benedictines, to be an essentially salutary part of the life of the almspeople, nor to bear a dignity of its own. It was looked upon as a substratum to the living of the higher life; all that was absolutely necessary to be done was to be dispatched with as much promptitude as possible.

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[1] Pātimokkha, Pācittiya Dhamma, 29, and V., iv., pp. 66, 67.

[2] Pātimokkha, Patidesaniya Dhamma, i.

[3] V., iv., p. 175.

[4] Pātimokkha, Patidesaniya, ii.

[5] V., iv., p. 263.

In this way also the almspeople were helped, for they often took their meals in the laity's houses, some having their regular supporters.[1] Hence cooking played but a small part in the daily routine.[2] The food acquired by begging required no cooking, for usually the lay-people gave food already cooked or food that required none.

The almswomen had so few personal possessions, and not many possessions in common, that little cleansing was needed. It would not take long to rinse out the almsbowl and turn it upside down to dry. Each almswoman was supposed to have only one begging bowl. It was the most which she could take out with her to have filled. Bowls made only of iron or clay were permitted,[3] but these varied in make, being, as the Old Commentary says, good, medium or inferior. It was prohibited to collect bowls,[4] either because the collector might use them to receive more than the regulation amount of food, or because, as the laity feared, he or she might enter into trade by selling them to a shop or in a vihāra, thereby infringing on the laity's prerogatives, and weakening the divisional difference between recluse and layman, which each side conceded ought to be kept rigid.

Whatever it was that the almswomen had consciously intended to do with their collections of bowls, such an event, detail though it is, is symptomatic of various subconscious processes. For this slight assertion of the acquisitive instinct shows that renunciation sedulously pursued in the large matters will avenge itself by appearing in a multitude of trivial manifestations.

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[1] In the Kandy convent to-day "begging" is a formality, as the women only go to certain houses where they are expected to come. They mostly have their food sent cooked or uncooked by relations or friends, or these arrange with some shop-keeper to supply them regularly.

[2] My Burmese informant writes: "The nuns get up at 4 a.m. and cook rice and other things, and offer part to Buddha (images) and to priests as much as they can."

[3] V., iv., p. 243, and *cf.* CV., v., 8, 2; v., 9, 11, where instructions for the make of their bowls are given to the almsmen.

[4] V., iv., p. 243.

Of all the almswoman's possessions the three robes were decidedly the most cumbrous. The necessary care bestowed upon them, far more than the washing of pots and pans, throws her into the light of a domestic worker. Since she was allowed a needle, one of the eight possessions, if the robe were torn, presumably like the almsmen, she could use "slips of cloth inserted bolt-like to hold a torn robe together, patches and darns, and small pieces of cloth sewn on by way of marking, or of strengthening the robes."[1] And, of greater importance still, the almswoman washed and dyed her own clothes. Yet this was practically the full extent to which she might carry washing operations. For she was not allowed to wash and dye for the almsmen unless they were related;[2] and although in the earlier days some of the almswomen seem to have found an outlet for their superfluous energies in washing for the laity and waiting upon them, eventually the stricter almswomen complained.[3] A pācittiya rule was then made, declaring that it was an offence for an almswoman to do household work. The Old Commentary defines this as cooking, and washing cloaks and turbans in the houses of the laity.[4]

There is no suggestion that one or several almswomen ever washed for the Sangha as a whole. Each almswoman washed her own three robes. Hence the distribution of labour was perfectly fair; and hence no one almswoman had so much domestic work heaped upon her, or was employed solely for that purpose, as to leave her neither the requisite time nor energy to undertake more important duties. This plan also kept before each almswoman her responsibility for the care of her personal possessions. It also

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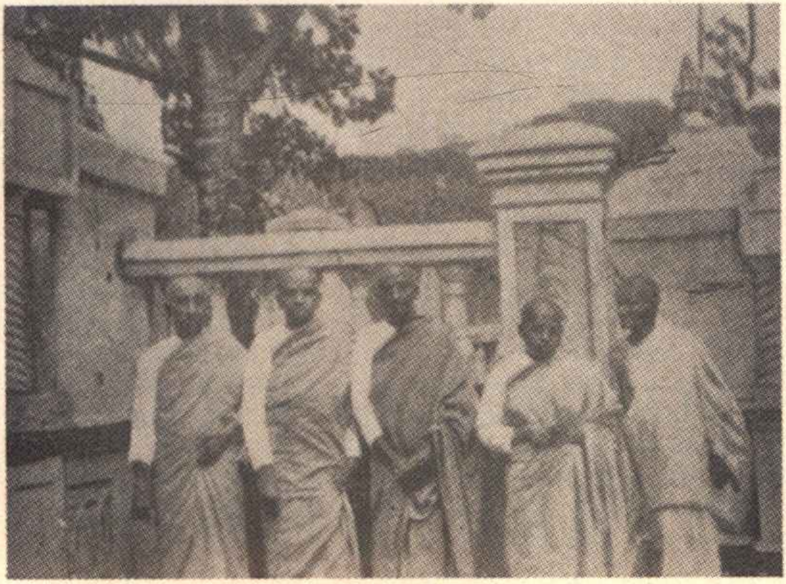
[1] MV., viii., 14, 2.

[2] See below, p. 274.

[3] V., iv., pp. 300, 301.

[4] *Ibid.*

PLATE III



CINGALESE BUDDHIST NUNS

[*face p.* 222

kept before her her responsibility for her share of the care of communal possessions. For after use, each one was, for example, supposed to wash the household overalls, the *āvasathacīvara*, which were common property, before handing them on.[1] It is recorded that failure to pass these on after use constituted a pācittiya offence.[2]

The three robes over which each almswoman had proprietary rights were long and loose, and were symbolical of the a-sexuality of the monastic life. They consisted of the cloak or toga, the *cīvara*, and two others.[3] Of these, the upper or outer robe was called the *uttarāsanga*, and the lower or inner, the *antara-vāsaka*. The three together were called the *ticīvara*. They were the same for the almswomen as for the almsmen,[4] and are the constantly mentioned yellow robes (*kāsāva vatthāni*),[5] or the patch-work cloth, (*bhinnapaṭa*.)[6] No flowers or cobras' heads should be worked on them.[7] The uniformity of the colour was only flecked by the diversity introduced by the dyes, for the almspeople were forbidden to wear robes that were "all of a blue, light yellow, crimson, black, brownish-yellow, or dark yellow colour."[8] But the materials of which the robes could be made were of six different kinds.[9]

In addition to the *ticīvara* the almswomen appear sometimes to have worn a wrapping cloak, the *tharaṇa*-

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[1] V., iv., p. 303.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Rhys Davids and Stede, *Dictionary*, "*Santaruttarena*," "with an inner and an outer garment," *cf.* V., iv., 281.

[4] One of the almsmen's robes was also called the *sanghāṭī*.

[5] The almswomen seen by the writer in Burma do not wear such yellow robes as those worn by the almsmen, but robes with a decidedly pinkish tinge. They give a drab effect which the almsmen's do not. In Kandy also the robe is a dingy yellowish colour, not the bright yellow of the monks.

[6] V., iv., p. 214; and CV., x., 10, 4.

[7] CV., x., 10, 4.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] V., i., pp. 58, 96, 281, *khoma* (linen cloth), *kappāsika* (cotton), *koseyya* (silk), *kambala* (woollen) *sāṇa* and *bhanga* (coarse hempen cloth).

pāvuraṇa.[1] It was large enough for two to share, but they were forbidden to do this;[2] in the same way, although they were allowed to use a half-divan,[3] they were forbidden to sleep two together on one couch,[4] the laity having complained that this resembled the conduct of the women of the world (*gihikāmabhoginiyo*, literally, enjoyers of the senses). Presumably the intention was also to discourage too strong an affection from springing up between any two of them. Personal ties might prove to be a hindrance to leading the higher life; hence chances for forming them had to be reduced wherever it was possible.

Almswomen had also to wear a bodice, the *saṃkacchika*, described in the Old Commentary as coming from below the collar-bone to above the navel for the purpose of hiding the breast.[5] At least they should wear it when they went into the villages. On one occasion when an almswoman had failed to do this the wind caught her cloak and blew it over her head. Some men saw and shouted after her, "Lovely is the waist of the lady." This scoffing so much distressed her that the rule was made as a safeguard in the future.[6]

By setting out on the begging-round, *pattacīvaraṃ ādāya*, which, translated literally, is taking the bowl and robe, is meant putting on the outer robe. The *cīvara* was worn when going out, and no almsman ever went taking it over his arm. He went wearing it. Because some almswomen went into the country without wearing the *cīvara*, but only the outer and inner garments, an almswoman was declared to commit a pācittiya offence if she passed five days without her cloak.[7]

The keenly felt sense of ownership over one's own belongings, further emphasising the point that not all property was communal at the beginning, and that it would not have been sensible to have had it so, is evinced in a certain almswoman's denunciation of Thullanandā for daring to ask for her cloak back, after an exchange between the two had been made. This ended in her declaring: "*Yaṃ tuyhaṃ tuyhaṃ ev'etaṃ, yaṃ mayaṃ mayaṃ ev'etaṃ*" ("What is yours is yours, what is mine is mine).[1] The instinct to possess is a common factor of human nature. The wisdom permeating Gotama's system was ready to meet this need. For although worldly goods had to be renounced and eschewed, the longing after these things, which by analogy with the eruptions due to the thwarting of other instincts might have been serious, seems to have been soothed and restrained by the personal possession of the eight belongings.

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[1] V., iv., p. 289.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] CV., x., 27, 2, note 2, "probably a cushion."

[4] V., iv., p. 288.

[5] In Ceylon nowadays nuns wear long-sleeved white blouses.

[6] V., iv., p. 345.

[7] V., iv., p. 281.

Besides, if one had property oneself, so had other people. Respect for the possessions of others is recognisable in the pācittiya rule in the Almsmen's Vinaya which decrees that an almsman who gives his *cīvara* to an almsman or to an almswoman should not go on wearing it;[2] in the pācittiya rule which decrees that although unrelated almsmen and almswomen could exchange robes,[3] once an almsman had made over his robe to an almswoman he should not continue to use it; and by a pārājika offence being committed if an almsman or an almswoman pick up or remove a cloak which belongs to another.[4] On the occasion which led to the formulation of this rule both an almsman and an almswoman had sinned in this way, and abuse had been hurled at the offenders by members of their own community. It looked to these as if there had been stealing, one of the five deadly sins.

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[1] V., iv., p. 247; and *cf.* Dhp. Cmy. on verse 240.

[2] V., iv., p. 121; and *cf.* below, p. 273 ff.

[3] Pācittiya Dhamma, 25; Nissaggiya Pācittiya Dhamma, 5.

[4] V., iii., p. 57.

It is clear that they were acutely sensitive to any imputation or suggestion of theft, as is also borne out in the quick retort of Caṇḍakālī when she was asked by the other almswomen whether she had seen their goods.[1] She immediately jumped to the conclusion that they were accusing her of stealing. "What, am I a thief then? If I take your things, I am fallen from the higher life, and reborn in purgatory (*niraya*). She who accuses me is also disgraced."

A further emphasis on the almswomen's personal and not communal use of the cloak is found in the prohibition to shift it from one to another.[2] An almswoman had once been made angry by finding that her cloak was wet: another had put it on, either by mistake or on purpose, and had gone out in it on a wet day. The latter's action, her potential or actual disrespect for the rights of others was seized upon as being blameworthy. None of the false altruism of resignation or self-denial, no appeal to turn the other cheek, was laid before the injured party.

The gift of robes was often made by the pious lay-people, and by inference it would seem that almswomen might receive gifts of robes from almsmen relatives,[3] and have robes made up for them by almsmen relatives, or at their instigation.[4]

The Sanghas also acquired robes by the death of one of their members. If on the deathbed that member should say, "After I am gone, let my set of necessaries belong to the Sangha,"[5] the eight things over which a member of the Order had proprietary rights while alive, on his or her death returned to the Order. Presumably even if the dying one did not make this request "on the death of an almsman, almsmen, the

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[1] V., iv., p. 276. Caṇḍakālī only appears in the Vinaya. She may not have been an historical personage.

[2] V., iv., p. 282.

[3] See below, p. 273.

[4] Pācittiya Dhamma, 26.

[5] CV., x., 11, 1.

Sangha becomes the owner of his bowl and robes."[1] They were received back by the Sangha and were to be disposed of anew by the Sangha in its totality, and evidently not by the various departmental officials.[2] But although the Sangha became the owner of the bowl and robes of "him who has completed his time,"[3] it had not a perfectly free hand in the distribution of them. For Gotama recognised that "those who wait upon the sick are of much service. I prescribe, almsmen, that the set of bowl and robes are to be assigned by the Sangha to them who have waited upon the sick,"[4] as at all events those who shared cells were expected to do if one of them were ill.[5] Dutt says that this legacy was made "perhaps as a sort of perquisite."[6] This does not seem to me to be a true explanation, for it would be more in keeping with Buddhist notions to regard this custom as a token of affection than in the light of wages taken. No rule is laid down to the effect that a deceased almswoman's bowl and robes should be assigned to those who attended her in her last illness; it only occurs with reference to the almsmen, but "the analogy would doubtless hold good of the almswomen also."[7] These rules also apply to the distribution of the property of deceased novices.

It came to be forbidden for an almswoman to wear a loin-cloth, *sanghāṇi*.[8] They were evidently expected to wear their clothes securely without its aid, and to be different in all the details of dress from the women of the world. But they continued to be allowed to wear a girdle (*kāyabandhana*), another symbolical article of dress, if it conformed to a prescribed and modified style. The rules that were drawn up were all monastic in character, their intention being to promote the simple ascetic life; in order to achieve this end, the natural desires of the women to adorn themselves from the primitive means at their disposal had to be quelled. The tongues of the world, all too ready to wag on the slightest provocation, had also to be quelled. When the laypeople objected to the long girdles worn by the almswomen, and also to the fringes which they arranged,[1] a rule concerning girdles was brought into force. "I allow an almswoman, almsmen, a girdle that will go round the body and fringes are not to be arranged in it. Whoever does so shall be guilty of a dukkata offence." Neither were the almsmen allowed to wear special girdles, but "those made of strips of cloth,"[2] and many details of the kinds of material or decoration to avoid were given to both the Orders. Precisely the same prohibitions were made for both Orders with respect to the kind of dress that they should not wear.[3]

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[1] MV., viii., 27, 2.

[2] Mention of these is made at CV., vi., 21.

[3] MV., viii., 27, 1. [4] MV., viii., 27, 5. [5] V., iv., p. 291.

[6] Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism*, p. 183.

[7] CV., x., 11, note 1 to the translation.

[8] Rhys Davids and Stede's translation, *Dictionary*. The Old Commentary describes it as something which goes about the hips. But this might be a petticoat. V., iv., p. 339 ff.

Unlike the women of the world in almost every item of their apparel, unlike them too in being covered from the waist up,[4] the almswomen tried to imitate them in wearing women's ornaments until this also was forbidden.[5] Ornaments are described in the Old Commentary as something which goes on the head, hands, feet, neck and hips. As depicted in many of the old bas-reliefs they were often elaborate and heavy.

Nor were almswomen allowed to use parasols[6] and

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[1] A detailed description is given in CV., x., 10, 1.

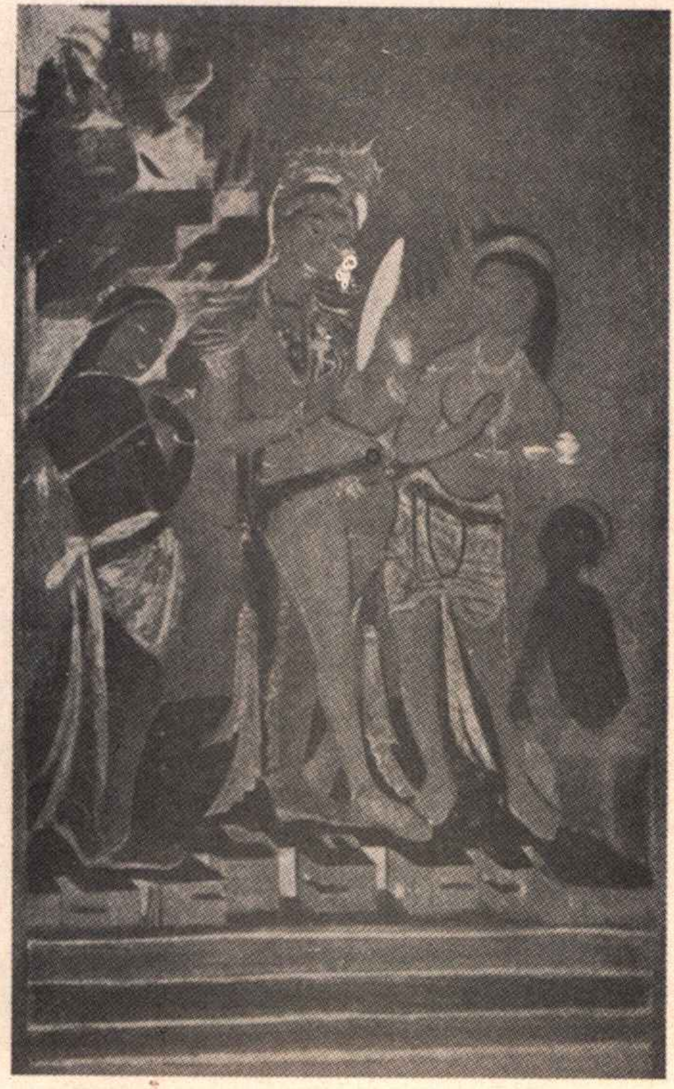
[2] CV., v., 29, 2.

[3] CV., x., 10, 4; and MV., viii., 29.

[4] Dialogues, i., p. 130, note 1.

[5] V., iv., p. 340. *Cf.* CV., v., 2, 1, where ornaments are forbidden to the almsmen.

[6] V., iv., p. 337; and *cf.* CV., v., 23, 2. In Kandy plain umbrellas are allowed; also palm-leaf fans.



THE TOILET : A RICHLY JEWELLED PRINCESS WITH HER MAIDENS

(Lady Herringham, Ajanta Frescoes, India Society, 1915)

slippers unless they were ill.[1] This it is said was the training set forth for the almswomen by the Lord. These articles would rank as communal property. Apparently, whether ill or well, almsmen were allowed the use of sunshades, but he who had one held over him was guilty of a dukkata.[2] Almsmen were forbidden to go into the villages with their shoes on,[3] unless they were ill,[4] and they were allowed a bag in which to carry them.[5] They were told the kind of shoe they must not wear and the kinds of decoration not allowed.[6] Any almswoman who tried to break the uncompromising rigidity of her personal attire, had to be kept in check. With opportunity for variety in dress, vanity would not keep her distance. Hence no sanctions were given for buying ornaments and for displaying them, or for falling into a luxurious physical decline by the use of parasols and slippers.

Yet if life lacked drama and excitement, it was not one long unbroken monotony. There were many small occupations to bring in the breath of change which is the breath of life. Of great importance among these was bathing. Besides giving rise to various events and discussions after the sanction for it had been granted; and besides introducing variety into the almswomen's lives, in itself it would have been a pleasurable experience, for most Indian people delight in washing the body.

Each almswoman was expected to take a bathe, either in the vihāra bathing places, or in a river or a pond, but there is no indication of how often she should do so. Since there are detailed instructions for the almsmen, it looks as though the almswomen's records are here incomplete. The almsmen committed a pācittiya offence if they bathed at intervals of less than half a month, except during the two and a half months of the hot weather, when there is also fever, or unless they were sick, or there was work, or they were on a journey, or there had been wind and rain.[1] The same rules would probably have been enforced for the almswomen.

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[1] V., iv., p. 337. My Burmese informant tells me that nowadays these are used. But the sandals must not be fancy ones, such as are used by the lay-people. In Kandy socks and shoes are not permitted, but sandals may be worn.

[2] CV., v., 23, 2, 3 ; *cf.* CV., viii., 1.

[3] Minute regulations for the use of foot-wearing by the almsmen are given at MV., v., 1, 29 ; v., 8, 3. Presumably almswomen could wear much the same kind of foot covering.

[4] MV., v., 12.

[5] CV., v., 12.

[6] MV., v., 8, 3.

Since the chronology of the Vinaya is so vague it is impossible to tell whether the almswomen refrained from bathing until, as it is reported, formal permission was granted by Gotama. The story goes that Mahāpajāpatī went to Gotama and standing to leeward declared that the women were of an evil smell.[2] "Let the almswomen wash," was the rejoinder, full of practical common-sense. Gotama is said to have told the almsmen that he allowed bathing for the almswomen. But here, even though they were in the nature of hygienic measures, the privileges extended to these women, several of whom were somewhat crude and sordid, led, as was so often the case, to a series of abuses and to a corresponding series of corrective rules. Judging by the records of the almswomen's dirty ways while bathing,[3] and which, by the comparison drawn, were also the ways of the laity, the water must often have been polluted. This would account for a certain almswoman developing a boil in an inconvenient place from bathing in too-deep water; and for the pācittiya rule that was brought in decreeing that the maximum depth into which they could go must not exceed the length of two finger-joints.[4]

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[1] V., iv., pp. 116-119. *Cf.* the Rule of Christ Church, Canterbury, which declares that "The use of baths shall be offered to the sick as often as it is necessary: to the healthy and especially to youths, it shall not be so readily conceded." Given by Cranage, *The Home of the Monk*, Cambridge, 1927, p. 59.

[2] V., iv., p. 262. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*

In the beginning they bathed naked. This perhaps would not have mattered, had not some almswomen happened to bathe, either by choice or of necessity, at the same place, at a ford,[1] and again in a river,[2] that was being used by some courtesans. On the first occasion, the courtesans cavilled at them, for behaving, as they thought, in an unsuitable fashion. They said in the well-known strain that they were like the women of the world. On the second occasion they mocked and tempted them saying, "What are you young almswomen doing with the holy life? Why not now enjoy the pleasures of the senses, and join the holy life when you are old? Then you will be able to have it at both ends." It probably was not feasible to order the almswomen not to bathe with the courtesans, since the possible times for bathing were limited by climatic and occupational exigencies, and bathing places were few and far between. The whole situation was further complicated because the almswomen were forbidden to bathe at any but the common bathing places, for once when they had been doing so men of abandoned life had violated them.[3] They were likewise forbidden to bathe at the bathing places used also by men, for this had brought down the complaints of the laity.[4] Whoever disobeyed either of these injunctions was guilty of a dukkata offence. The net result of all these vicissitudes was that they were allowed to bathe at the bathing places reserved for women only. Even so they would still remain the possible victims of the pernicious conversations of the courtesans. One source of mockery and of disturbing ideas could however be removed, and Gotama is reported to have made it a pācittiya offence for almswomen to bathe naked.[5]

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[1] V., iv., p. 259-260.

[2] V., iv., p. 278.

[3] CV., x., 27, 4.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] V., iv., p. 278. This is one of the very rare occasions on which a rule was made without its being recorded that anyone had complained.

In the next pācittiya[1] it is recorded that as was permitted by the Lord, the almswomen wove some bathing dresses (*udakasāṭikā*). The six almswomen who were always giving trouble made them of no particular fit, so that they trailed in front and behind. The virtuous almswomen murmured and complained. As a result a pācittiya was made to the effect that bathing dresses must be made of a particular measure, which was given as four times twelve finger-breadths (*vidatthiyo*).

By a pācittiya rule,[2] which is placed later, weaving was made an offence. If it included, as it must have done, the weaving of bathing dresses, gifts of these would have been welcomed with especial satisfaction. Nor were they far to seek. Visākhā, the great lay-patroness of the Order, for example, asked as an eighth boon in bestowing permanent alms upon the Order that she might be allowed to provide the almswomen with bathing dresses;[3] for she had heard that the courtesans with whom they had been bathing had ridiculed them. Gotama allowed this, and praised Visākhā for asking the eight boons of the Tathāgata. He recognised the value of the lay-people to the Order in providing its members with the wherewithal of life; and the value of the Order to the lay-people in providing them with a means of expressing their social obligations, and of enlarging their group-consciousness.

Thus personal cleanliness was encouraged. Each almswoman was also expected to brush and clean her own cell in the vihāra. Almswomen had been allowed to assign certain places (*puggalikaṃ-kātuṃ*) to live in to individual members of the Order,[4] as being the least that would satisfy them. This permission and custom could not have failed incidentally to diminish the friction of conventual life. Even so, some appear to have shared cells.[1]

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[1] V., iv., pp. 278-279.

[2] V., iv., pp. 299-300; and see below, p. 233.

[3] MV., viii., 15.

[4] CV., x., 24, 1; and *cf.* Therīgāthā, verse 68; Dhp. Cmy. on verse 35.

Most other kinds of work with the hands came to be forbidden. As has been said the weaving of thread was knocked off, because it smacked of worldly occupation, as the complaints of the laity testify.[2] It must have included the weaving material for robes, for the six kinds of thread placed under the ban of being woven[3] are identical with the six kinds of robe-material mentioned.[4] It must have been before this restriction was enforced that Mahāpajāpatī came to Gotama and asked him to accept two new lengths of cloth from her as being the work of her own hands at the loom, expressly for him.[5] The almsmen, on the other hand, were vouchsafed the use of a loom and of shuttles, strings, tickets, and all the apparatus belonging to a loom.[6] The prohibition of weaving had the added character of placing the almswomen in a position of greater dependence on the laity. From henceforth, if the supply of gifts of robe-material failed, robes would have to be made of rags taken from the refuse-heap.

Neither agriculture, nor gardening, nor any similar manual work entered into the day's routine, principally because the possibility of slaying living creatures in the soil was contrary to the doctrine of *ahiṃsā*[7] (non-injury). It was easy to adhere to this doctrine: the touring in all but the rainy season would provide sufficient exercise to keep the almswomen healthy; and since the vihāras were built near to the towns and not in remote and secluded places, there was no necessity for them to be self-supporting. They could rely upon the laity to give them the products of the soil.

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[1] V., iv., p. 291, *sahajīvin* (fem. -*ī*), a co-inmate; again at V., iv., 325.

[2] V., iv., pp. 229-300. [3] V., iv., p. 300. [4] See above, p. 223.

[5] Majjhima, iii., 253. [6] CV., v., 28, 2.

[7] The word *ahiṃsā* appears but seldom in the Noble Eightfold Path; *e.g.*, Majjhima, iii., 251. Right resolves are the resolves to renounce the world and do no hurt or harm; *cf.* Dhp., 261, 270; Ang. i., 151. It was not a particularly Buddhist notion, but belonged to the common thought of India.

They were permitted to go to shops. It is recorded that some of them went in order to procure the equivalent for some money deposited by a layman with a merchant for their benefit;[1] and that Thullanandā once when she was ill sent a novice to a shop to buy some oil for her.[2] But the difference between going out to buy necessities and going out with the aim of working was, to the Buddhist way of thinking, something quite definite.

Work for the Buddhist almspeople, owing to Gotama's teaching, could not include physical labour of an agricultural type, and manual work was ruled out by his scale of values. Nor, owing to the "sweetly-reasonable" view of asceticism which he held, did it mean bodily mortification. It meant mental effort in such conditions as were most conducive to sustaining it. To have mastery in the realm of ideas rather than in the world of implements was the ideal, and more in accordance with a recluse's way of living. To further this end, to help to concentrate the thoughts on other-worldly matters, and to promulgate that clear distinction between the Order and the laity which it was so necessary to foster, almspeople were forbidden entertainments, music, dancing or singing,[3] or visits to picture-houses,[4] which were yet considered quite right and reasonable for the lay-people to enjoy.

Other regulations were drawn up for the greater simplicity of living, and for the elimination of enjoyment gained by the stimulation of the senses. The almswomen were not allowed to have their backs and other parts of their bodies scrubbed or slapped with the bones of oxen.[1] It is said that again the people murmured, were indignant and complained, saying "as the women of the world do." This prohibition is in essence repeated later, and with the usual comparison with the women of the world. It was said that almswomen must not be massaged or shampooed by other almswomen,[2] or by a probationer, a novice, or by a laywoman.[3] By this ruling another link with the laity was incidentally severed. In these early days of monasticism it was important, while keeping the world and the cloister in close contact with one another, to make a feature of their differences and to impress upon the religious adherents that they could not both leave the world for the sake of "freedom" and keep to it for the sake of the gratification of their senses. This kind of bodily massage was thought to be sensuous and luxurious, and had therefore to be relinquished. The almsmen likewise were forbidden to rub their bodies against wood[4] when they were bathing, for in the eyes of the laity this act put them into the same category as boxers, wrestlers, shampooers, as men who, in fact, made gods of their bodies, and who indulged to a high degree in physical pleasures. They were allowed, however, the ordinary mode of shampooing with the hand,[5] or a rubbing post, but it is not clear, as it is in the case of the almswomen, whether they were allowed to shampoo one another or not.

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[1] V., iv., p. 252.

[2] V., iv., p. 250.

[3] V., iv., p. 267. *Cf.* CV., v., 2, 6, where there is a similar prohibition for the almsmen.

[4] V., iv., p. 298, *paṭibhānacitta*. It here seems to indicate a display of paintings in a gallery for such in the King's gardens. The word occurs again at V., iv., p. 61, and seems here to mean a displayed picture either painted or embroidered on a cloak. The Commentary is of no help on either occasion.

The same tendency is developed in a regulation which is given in exactly the same words for the almswomen[6] as for the almsmen.[7] "You are not, almsmen, to anoint your faces, nor to put chunam on your faces, nor to smear red arsenic on your faces, nor to paint your bodies nor to paint your faces." The almsmen, however, were privileged in being allowed to paint their faces in cases of disease.

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[1] CV., x., 10, 2.
[2] V., iv., p. 342.
[3] V., iv., pp. 342-343.
[4] CV., v., 1, 1.
[5] CV., v., 1, 5.
[6] CV., x., 10, 3.
[7] CV., v., 2, 5.

There were more regulations, all directed towards the subduing of the senses. Some had the special object of suppressing the instinct of self-display. They forbade the use of chairs of an extra long or ornamental make, or stuffed with hair;[1] they forbade making tattoo-marks by the corner of the eyes, or on the cheeks;[2] peeping out of the window; standing in the light of a half-opened door; having dances performed; all of which merge perhaps in the other regulations which attempted to keep the almswomen unsullied by the world's stain, and to secure the maximum of time and single-mindedness for them to devote to their monastic duties. Courtesans were not to be associated with, presumably because they might inflame the almswomen with their worldly talk, or attempt to lure them away from the higher life. (Another possible interpretation of this is that the almswomen were not allowed to keep brothels.) Nor were they to keep a tavern or a slaughter-house, for the drinking of intoxicating liquor and the taking of life were among the five major abstentions to be observed. They were not to open a shop, or to practise usury (for the sake of gain). They were not to supply men-slaves or women-slaves, or men-servants or maid-servants or animals. They were not to carry on a business as a florist or seedsman, for these entail the destruction of life. Nor were they to carry the razor-case, which Rhys Davids thinks evidently means here to be a barber.[3] In a word they were not to resemble the world by going into business, nor were they to have any traffic with it. The staple of their relations with the laity was to be confined to the interchange of the

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[1] V., iv., p. 299.

[2] CV., x., 10, 4, where the rest of this list is also given.

[3] CV., x., 10, 4. See note 3.

Dhamma and of alms, and was not to include commercial interests. Exciting financial gains and losses and even trading in a small way were to have no chance to compete in a sphere whose object it was to promote spiritual growth.

For this reason, and because the Sanghas subsisted so largely on alms given by the laity, there would be no necessity to keep accounts of incomings, and no occasion to keep account of expenditure, for there was none.

Practical charity to the sick and needy was not extolled among the Buddhist virtues; and with certain exceptions extended to the almsmen to visit their sick relatives, it was never encouraged. Hence neither they nor the almswomen maintained infirmaries either for their own members or for the laity.[1] Very uncommon must have been such places as that, said to have been arranged by the Bodhisat in the Hall which he was building, for the lying-in of destitute women.[2]

Likewise no lay-visitors came to stay at the vihāras. Hence sleeping arrangements caused no difficulties;[3] and no worldly and disturbing notions and customs were imported from this source. Hence, too, no time was spent on the preparation of food for guests, or on entertaining them. Now and again poor people arrived when the almspeople were taking their meals.[4] On such occasions, being of charitable disposition, they would sometimes share their repast with the stranger, for it is said, "Should a stranger come at meal-time, and an almsman offer him food, failing the best food he should give him precisely the same food as he himself is eating, be it little or much."[5] This kind of casual entertainment is obviously quite different from a regular habit of providing for the laity.

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[1] In Kandy at the present day the nuns run a dispensary where free (Sinhalese, *i.e.*, Ayurvedic) medicines are dispensed to the poor.

[2] Jātaka, 546.

[3] *Cf.* Power, *Medieval English Nunneries*, p. 408 ff.

[4] Therīgāthā, xlix.; and see above, p. 202.

[5] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 110.

No time was spent on writing down or on recording the sacred literature. Since the Vinaya has so few references to manuscripts and to writing apparatus, and since the texts in other connections are detailed in nature, the evidence is fairly conclusive that the writing materials which existed were but seldom used: and probably not at all by the almswomen. This may have been of assistance in maintaining the discipline of the Order, for had they known the art, quite conceivably they would have communicated by letter with the outside world.[1]

The almswomen were definitely enjoined "not to devote themselves to worldly wisdom (*tiracchānavijjā*),"[2] but the Vibhanga makes an exception in favour of learning what is written.[3] It must be remembered, however, that the exact date at which each rule was formulated is unknown, and it is possible that this is a late one, coming into force as writing became more common.

It is not very likely that much or even any time was spent in this exercise of learning what was written, for before writing became common, oral transmission would necessarily have the field to itself, and much time would presumably be given to memorising from teachers and not from what was written. Learning by heart thus became of extreme importance, and in order that a Suttanta, for example, should not "fall

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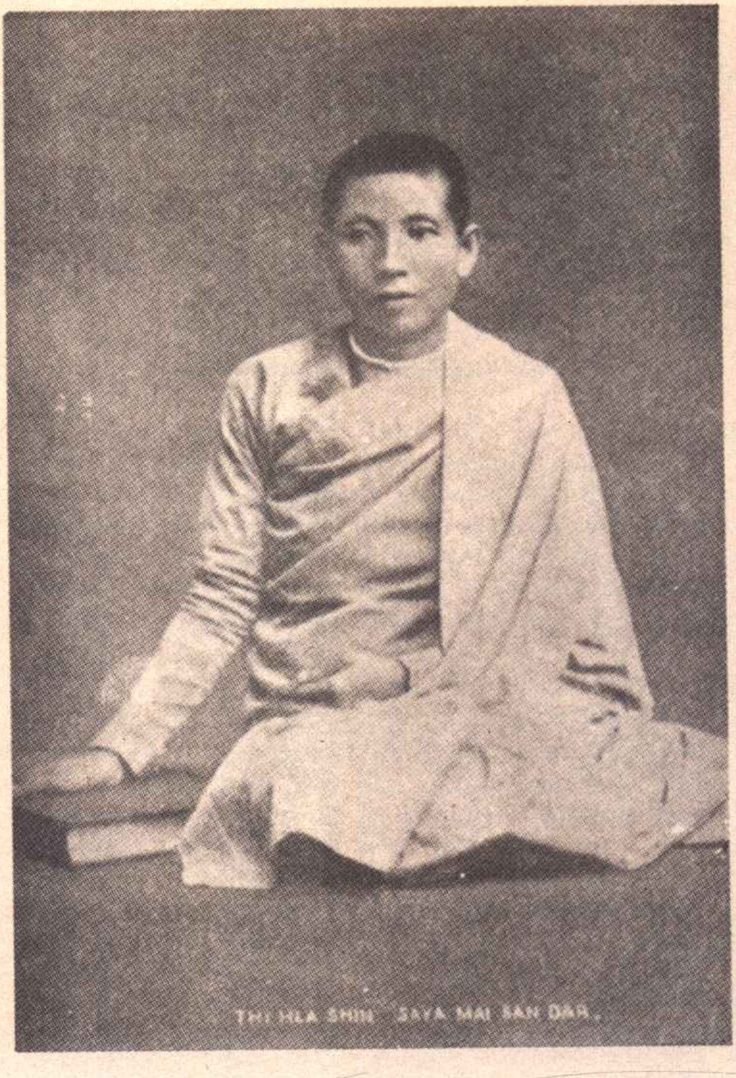
[1] *Cf.* Power, *Medieval English Nunneries*, p. 408. Alnwick sent injunctions to attempt to control such communication.

[2] Lit. "animal wisdom"; *cf.* Childers, "a low, unworthy art or practice." The Old Commentary describes it as anything connected with external welfare, and so it may stand for worldly wisdom. *Cf.* Dialogues, vol. iii., p. 33, note 2. Rhys Davids concludes that "childish" is the most suitable way in which to translate *tiracchānakathā*, explaining that on account of the Indian view that men and animals are different in degree only, but that men cannot talk animal talk, childish talk comes nearest to explaining it.

[3] V., iv., 305.

PLATE V


THI HLA SHIN SAYA MAI SAN DAR.

BURMESE BUDDHIST NUN

into oblivion "[1] almsmen were allowed to travel even during the rainy season to learn it from a layman who sent them a message to say that he knew it and would like to communicate it to them.[2]

It does not appear whether the almswomen were allowed to learn the Suttantas. It is only decreed that they were not allowed to dissipate themselves in learning a half or quarter line of poetry (*pade pade*, one letter or syllable after another).[3] What they had rather to do was to concentrate upon knowledge of the rules.

If the restrictions grew apace, many other interests were closed by a variety of limitations. In contradistinction to the nunneries of the West, there were no set hours for prayers or offices to keep the almswomen punctual and regular; no rosaries to tell,[4] no images to worship as an aid to concentration; no processions and festivals to give respite from the work of introspection and meditation; no embroidery or needlework to do for religious purposes and to which to turn as a resource in leisure hours, for there were no places of worship to be decorated; no manuscripts to be copied; no books to be read and no libraries to be attended to; and no austerities to be practised.

Even though Gotama did not forbid austerities, he never encouraged recluses to perform them. He always emphasised the adoption of the Middle Way, as the safest means of yielding the desired result. By avoiding the two extremes of life given to the senses and life given to mortifications could insight and nirvāna be most quickly gained.[1] None of the severe type of austerities[2] and none of the "freak practices"[3] of asceticism were to be found among his disciples. De la Vallée Poussin has an illuminating note on this point:[4] "Pour comprendre cette position moyenne, il faut se souvenir que plusieurs sectes permettaient aux religieux la jouissance de toutes les femmes 'non gardées' (non mariées, fiancées, etc.); que d'autres sectes voyaient dans la mortification (vœux du taureau, du chien, etc.) indépendamment de la méditation et de la sagesse, la route de la délivrance."

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[1] MV., iii., 5, 9.

[2] *Cf.* also MV., ii., 17, where it is laid down that if there are no almsmen in a Sangha who know the Pātimokkha they may send one of their members to a neighbouring Sangha for the purpose of learning it, and not, be it noticed, for the purpose of fetching a copy, or of making a copy.

[3] V., iv., p. 305.

[4] Rosaries were introduced later into Buddhism. It is not exactly known at what date, but in the beginning they have no place among the almsman's or almswoman's eight legitimate possessions, or among the communal property.

Life in the Order, in its broad outlines, combined a judicious amount of regularity and variety. There was the keeping of Vassa (the rains), ending with the Pavāraṇā ceremony and the Kathina ceremony; and the touring during the rest of the year provided a refreshing change of scene and society. There were prescribed days set apart for the performance of the various ceremonies, such as Ordination, Exhortation and Confession, which last came to occupy two whole days every half month. And lastly there were the recurring tasks of everyday life. These began with the alms-round, and went on to the meal before midday, the withdrawal for meditation afterwards, and preaching and learning and attending discourses in the evening. Life was regularised into a definite plan, to the satisfaction of those who find comfort in routine; peace of mind in the thought of daily item following on daily item according to a course mapped by authority; and a spur to integrity of conduct in doing things which have to be done.

At the same time, the necessity for performing many

[1] MV., i., 6, 17. His first sermon.

[2] For list of these see Majjhima, i., 77, 78; and Dialogues, i., p. 166 ff.

[3] Further Dialogues of the Buddha, trans. Lord Chalmers, intr. p. xvi; and *cf.* Majjhima, i., 387.

[4] De la Vallée Poussin, Nirvāna, Paris, 1925, p. 18.

duties and observances was absent. The observation of silence which might have cut both ways was never enjoined or commended. Yet the ever-increasing stringency of other rules emptied a large part of each day of those domestic tasks and small pleasures which, by their capacity to absorb interest, keep many simple-minded women balanced. It is therefore not surprising that the strain of bearing denial, added to the daily rub, sometimes broke out into quarrels and disputes. What is surprising, even in the almost undoubtedly incomplete state of the records, is that there are not more accounts of grumbling and quarrels than there are. These do no more than serve as reminders that there were occasional rifts in the harmony. How many more there may have been, but for which no records have survived, is incalculable. Things might not have turned out as the almswomen had hoped;[1] misunderstandings arose;[2] green-eyed jealousy raged, avenging itself on the innocent;[3] there were accusations and imputations of theft;[4] and last but not least there were almswomen, typified by Caṇḍakālī who were quarrelsome makers of discord by nature.[5] Remorse they sometimes knew, and emotional and conscience-stricken they would smite themselves and weep.[6] But if they did not thus acknowledge themselves to be in the wrong, if "having fallen into quarrel, strife and dispute, come to blows,"[7] it remained to settle the disputes. It is said that Gotama decreed that almsmen might settle the point at issue for almswomen;[8] and that they might also set on foot (*ropetuṃ*, or pass off) an official act for almswomen (and the dealing with the offence), and then give them in charge for almswomen to carry out the official act against almswomen, and to accept the confession of the offence.[1] Seven other means of settling disputes are recorded.[2] They could be settled either in the presence of the Chapter of Almsmen and of the party accused, or by the discipline of the appeal to the conscience out of court, by mutual agreement; or by acquitting "on ground of restored sanity" (after people had lost their tempers); or by giving a pledge, promise or acknowledgment; or by settling the case by the majority; or without listening to the complaint; or by smoothing it over (the Covering over as with grass),[3] settling it without its being necessary to go into details.

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[1] V., iv., pp. 301, 331.

[2] V., iv., p. 275.

[3] V., iv., pp. 282, 290.

[4] V., iv., p. 276.

[5] V., iv., pp. 230, 276, 309.

[6] V., iv., p. 277.

[7] CV., x., 7, 1.

[8] *Ibid.*

The last but one (*tassapāpiyyasikā*) of these methods is translated by Childers[4] as "an act done to a sinful man" like the almsman Uvāla.[5] When he was examined by the Chapter of Almsmen for an offence, he shilly-shallied, alternately denying and confessing it, and knowingly telling lies. It is for this reason that Rhys Davids[6] translates it "the Proceeding in the case of the obstinately wrong"; he suggests that it should probably read "the proceeding against one who is more sinful (*pāpiyo*) than that (*tassa*); that is, who adds sin to sin."

Childers, quoting Vijesimha Mudaliyar, has a note enumerating both the reasons why this censure should be imposed upon almsmen, the first being for habitual quarrelling; and also the disqualifications which result from it, one being the Exhortation of the almswomen.[7] An analysis of the valid carrying out of the punishment is given in the Vinaya.[8]

Quarrels, then, had to be and were faced, as the provision for the settlement of disputes shows. But it was as impossible to make general rules to prevent quarrelling, as it was impossible to make general rules to prevent excessive greed or improper relations with members of the opposite sex. The irritation or the need of the average man or woman can usually devise some means of circumventing a general prohibition, while it is far harder to exculpate oneself for having broken a particular ruling of a compendium of morality. The Vinaya never says "Avoid quarrelling"; but the substance of every rule connected with quarrelling is "Avoid this or that occasion which gives rise to quarrelling." The surest way to tackle an evil, it was thought, and to prevent its possible recrudescence in the future, was by framing a series of particular propositions, whose common intention it was to remove all the causal conditions from which, by experience, the evil was found to have originated.

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[1] *Ibid.*

[2] V., iv., p. 351. Dialogues, iii., 254; Majjhima, ii., 247. The question is gone into at great length for the almsmen, CV., iv., 1-14.

[3] CV., iv., 13, 2.

[4] *Dictionary.*

[5] CV., iv., 11.

[6] CV., iv., 11, 1.

[7] See above, p. 127.

[8] CV., iv., 12.

Yet there were always miscreants. Not all who entered the Order were of the stuff that saints are made of. The majority were ordinary average men and women, with the ordinary difficulties of character to encounter. In the Vinaya, and especially the Bhikkhunī-Vibhanga, a low state of culture and primitive mental development are often revealed by the words and conduct of the almswomen as dominant elements. There are records of frequent attempts to evade the rules; of many squabbles over trifles; of a good deal of self-seeking and lack of mutual help; of slackness; greediness; ingratitude; of bad manners and irregular behaviour. Although many of the details of their life appear frankly lewd and disgusting to us, they are often written down with an engaging intimacy and *naïveté*. Many appear childish and pitiable. All show us women who knew not what they were missing. While they bickered and worried over clothes and food and medicine, there was the Teacher, or at least worthy teachers, among them, trying to show the way to live the holy life for the sake of salvation. There were many in the society of the day who recognised the exquisite powers of the Founder. But they, the bad almswomen, never knew, never cared, that he was one who had in full the attribute of leadership.

Movements for reform came from without and within. The driving-force was double-edged: a force from behind and without, borne in the complaints of the laity; and a force from in front and within, an ideal to be realised by willing to live out and experience a state of mental calm and tranquillity. The good almswomen, whose self-imposed task it was to protect the system, strove to inculcate better conditions by the complaints which they made of the behaviour of their less virtuous colleagues. If these did not mend their ways they would remain a constant source of anxiety as potential centres of disorder. Rather than leave them as such, rules were made to curb their disruptive tendencies.

Indeed it must always be remembered that rules are formulated to check the unruly: they remain as their legacy. The bad and troublesome almswomen are conspicuous because the rules were practically always made as a result of their escapades and wantonness, less frequently as a result of the difficulties consequent upon their sex. But back of these were the good and modest and virtuous almswomen, persistent in their efforts to raise the bad ones out of their murky, seamy world.

The virtuous ones at least were alive to their opportunities, conscious of their responsibilities, sensitive to the hope that was tacitly placed in them, and strongly imbued with love towards the Dhamma. They were determined to lead the good life themselves, and attempted to instigate others to follow it. They were able to do much by the force of example, and by teaching and preaching. But when they found that these ways were ineffective against the turbulence and arrogance which so often crossed them, then they complained. They complained of behaviour which affected the constitution and ideals of monastic life, such as the almswomen's relations with men;[1] of their treatment of the lay-people[2] or of their dealings with them;[3] of matters connected with ordination,[4] and the distribution and the possession of robes.[5] They complained of the breaking of the rules;[6] and of any matter which might be subversive to discipline,[7] such as the illegal restoration of almswomen after suspension, charges of pursuing desire, ill-will, ignorance, the rejection of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, and grumbling, slackness and jealousy. They complained if the truth were concealed,[8] or if promises were broken;[9] and they complained if the other almswomen did anything which was bad for their health,[10] for bodily welfare was thought to be an important factor in pursuing the holy life.

It is always said that the almswomen complained to Gotama through the almsmen, and never directly to him. This may be an example of the way in which the texts as they have been handed down have been distorted by the attempts of the monk-editors to magnify the male, to put knowledge within his grasp and to place all authority upon his knees. But if the almsmen served as the intermediaries, Gotama himself was the sole fount of all the legislative decrees. The rules appear as the aftermath of disturbances which he sought to quell as soon as they were reported to him. Throughout he appears to have been guided by two principles: the necessity for keeping the friendship of the laity, and the belief, which is perhaps the central psychological conception of Buddhism, that man is a willer.

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[1] V., iv., pp. 211 ff.; 218-222.
[2] V., iv., pp. 271, 274.
[3] V., iv., pp. 293, 300, 302.
[4] V., iv., pp. 225, 318-325, 327-330, *passim*.
[5] V., iv., pp. 246, 279, 281, 282, 284-287.
[6] V., iv., pp. 264, 322-325.
[7] V., iv., pp. 230, 235-239, 275, 290, 292, 309, 331.
[8] V., iv., p. 216 ff., pp. 239-242.
[9] V., iv., pp. 279, 301, 332, 333.
[10] V., iv., pp. 260, 262, 277.

If negations and denials multiplied and cramped the life of the almspeople, they also served to clear the ground of disturbing occupations and distracting influences, thus enabling the more positive aspects of the almspeople's capacities to be given full scope. They had will, which they could exert and direct in order that they might learn the doctrine and discipline, command the self-mastery necessary for meditation, and so live well. In this way they would obtain " the pure and spotless eye of truth " (that is, the following knowledge): " Whatsoever is subject to the condition of origination is subject also to the condition of cessation. If this alone be the Dhamma, now you have reached up to the state where all sorrow ceases (*i.e.*, Nirvāna)."[1] If this doctrine were to be grasped in its fulness and entirety, the paths which lead up to the cessation of sorrows must be trodden step by step; they must be taught, learned, sifted, understood, lived. This training would have been as indispensable for the aspiring almswoman as for the almsman. It was the training of the Middle Way, which, as Sāriputta describes it, was " naught but the Noble Eightfold Path of right outlook, right aims, right speech, right action, right means of livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration . . . inflation is vile and indolence is vile; for the shedding of inflation and indolence there is the Middle Way . . . giving us eyes to see, making us know, and leading us on to peace, insight, enlightenment, nirvāna which is naught but the Noble Eightfold Path."[2] And Gotama declares when talking to the Wanderer Māgandiya " Of Deathless Paths the Eightfold leads to Peace."[3]

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[1] MV., i., 23, 5; Mhp., vi., 10; *cf.* Dhp., 277.

[2] Majjhima, i., 15, 16. [3] *Ibid.* i., 508, 510.

CHAPTER IV (*continued*)

LIFE IN THE ORDER, PART II

Training of Novices.—Preaching.—Meditation.—Ways of Leaving the Order.

IT may thus be imagined that a considerable part of each day was spent in instruction on these tenets. In addition to discourses on various aspects of the Dhamma it was necessary for Elders to prepare novices (*antevāsibhikkhunī*) for the Upasampadā ceremony. The stages which their schooling usually followed were probably much like those narrated in the Dialogue between Gotama and the brahmin Gaṇaka-Mogallāna:[1] control of the actions, of the senses, temperance in eating, and the training to be vigilant, mindful and purposeful.

The Elder taught, the novice learnt, and in return waited upon the Elder. Vijayā[2] may be taken as a model for the novice's conformity to the double *régime* of serving and studying. She is described as serving as was due and as studying as was due, until with thorough grasp of the Dhamma she attained arahanship. Both these duties were considered to be important from the novice's point of view, though whether equally so or not we do not know. They probably went hand in hand.

The rendering of good service did not always pass unappreciated, accepted merely as a due merited by the teacher. For example, the great Bhaddā Kāpilanī was subtle in the art of seeing with other people's eyes and feeling with their hearts;[3] on one occasion she is recorded to have praised her novice, asserting that she had waited upon her carefully (*sakkaccaṃ*), and had rendered her good service.[1] As a reward she said that later she would give her a cloak (*i.e.*, at the next distribution).

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[1] Majjhima, iii., 2, 3.

[2] Therīgāthā Cmy. on lvii.

[3] Theragāthā Cmy. on cclxi.; and Therīgāthā, verses 63, 64, 66.

More may be learned of the service-aspect of noviciateship from a consideration of the attentions which Thullanandā expected of Caṇḍakālī. Although the relationship between them was probably not that of Elder and novice, yet because Thullanandā's position in the Order seems to have been that of a kind of major-domo, it apparently demanded reverence and respect from all, as from novices to Elders. Hence the relation in which everyone stood to her may be taken as typical of the service-relation between each novice and her Elder. In the Vinaya two stories survive, largely valuable as records of some of the tasks which the novice had to perform for her Elder. They doubtless refer to the same event.[2] Both relate that because Caṇḍakālī had been quarrelsome, the Chapter of Almswomen suspended her for not seeing her offence. In the meantime Thullanandā was gone into the village. When she had completed her business, she returned. But Caṇḍakālī did not put a seat for her, nor a foot-stool, nor give her water or a towel for her feet, nor did she rise to meet her, nor take her cloak and bowl, nor offer her anything to drink.[3] She indeed did nothing to make her welcome or comfortable. Thullanandā asked her why she behaved as though she had no mistress. In consequence of her suspension she had no appointments she said, and there was no one who could answer for her. Thullanandā called together a Council, but evidently only a small body, to restore Caṇḍakālī. The other almswomen complained at this, saying: " How can she reſtore her by the desire of a *gaṇa* (committee, quorum) againſt the desire of the Sangha ?" Such a proceeding was made into a sanghadisesa offence. It apparently and naturally took the whole Sangha to reſtore if the whole Sangha had suspended.

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[1] V., iv., p. 275.

[2] V., iv., pp. 230, 309.

[3] *Cf.* CV., viii., 2, where these details are set out in the same order, to be observed by a resident almsman towards an incoming one who is senior to him.

The necessity for ſtudying as was due is almoſt self-evident. For unless ſtudy were properly and earneſtly engaged upon, it would not be possible for a candidate to obtain the Upsampadā ordination.[1] It was evidently usual for probationers to spend their two years' noviciateship amongſt the almswomen, virtually entering the Order after the pabbajjā ordination had been conferred upon them; and there are many references to probationers who lived among the almswomen before they received the Upasampadā Ordination. Besides learning the Vinaya and persevering in the Six Rules, all the time they would be growing accuſtomed to the life which they hoped to adopt fully in due course. But there is documentary evidence to show that some novices did not live in this way. An even more sudden change would have been in ſtore for them when finally they had been fully ordained and had had to leave the world. For example, it appears that it was possible for a married woman to be a probationer, and yet to remain in the world, married.[2] Not until she had been ordained did she have. to leave the world, the world of households (*gahapatiputta*), which as the Old Commentary says includes sons and brothers;[3] but she had then to give up living in association with laymen, for it was intended that a quite other environment should supplant the familiar one. The Sangha says siſters (*bhaginiyo*) live in seclusion (*vūpakaṭṭha* literally, removed from the haunts of men) after ordination.[4] A later event made it appear necessary to declare that girls should live in seclusion,[1] if they were safely to remain in the religious life. For on one occasion a husband came to a vihāra and took away his newly-ordained but unsecluded wife. She probably should have gained his consent before entering, but even had she been admitted without it, once having taken this step, not even the King's decree could have obtained sanction for her release.[2] Some evidence for the security and shield thus afforded by the religious life and also for the Order's absolute claim over the entrant is found in the story of a wife who was an adulteress.[3] On hearing that her husband had declared that he would kill her, she took the best of their property, showed it to Thullanandā, and persuaded her to admit her to the Order. The husband found his wife with the almswomen; and being by now both anxious to recover his property and to punish what in Buddhist eyes was regarded as a heinous offence, he went off to ask King Pasēnadi to intervene, and to grant him his claim over her. Pasēnadi is said to have rejoined that if she had entered the holy life for putting an end to ill, it would be impossible to restore her to him.

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[1] See above, p. 138 ff.

[2] V., iv., p. 334.

[3] V., iv., p. 294.

[4] *Ibid.*, *viveka*; *cf.* iv., pp. 239, 241.

In the ruling on this case, while the sin of adultery was lost sight of, the blame was thrown on the almswomen for admitting a thief. It was decreed that if an almswoman knows that she is conferring Ordination on a thief (although no questions were put at the Upasampadā Ordination Ceremony as to whether the candidate were a thief or not) and does not call the attention of the King, of the Sangha, of a committee or of a quorum, then she is to be dealt with according to the decision of the Sangha. Such a ruling also shows in clear relief that while she was still in the world only that behaviour of the entrant was of any account to the Sangha which in some way rendered her not honourably free from the world.[1]

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[1] V., iv., p. 326.

[2] V., iv., p. 226.

[3] V., iv., pp. 225, 226; *cf.* above, p. 67.

It is possible that this case occurred before the stiffening of the rules prescribing the two years' noviciateship. For had the woman received only the pabbajjā Ordination, it does not seem likely that the Order would have had this absolute claim over her.

One of the benefits of the two years' training was that it precluded the admission of women who came seeking the shelter of the Order simply as a refuge from the pressure of disagreeable circumstances; perhaps seeking it in a spasm of provocation or fear. It would often have been by coincidence only that they were ascetics by nature: in many cases they might have been quite unfitted to lead a monastic life. Women hastily admitted might well have been among those who so often led the lay-people to complain that the almswomen were behaving like the women of the world, enjoyers of the senses (*gihikāmabhoginiyo*),[2] and not like true almspeople.

Some of the almswomen, besides training the novices for whom they were particularly responsible in the Six Rules,[3] also taught and preached to lay-votaries of religion and possibly also to the other almswomen. These outlets for educational enterprise would have been welcomed by the more intelligent and active-minded among them; for although they were under no formal obligation to preach, there were among them some who were born teachers; who would be at their best in personal contact with different kinds of people; and whose love towards the Dhamma would inspire them to convert the unconverted, and to go out and preach for the good of the many-folk as the first male converts had been told to do.

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[1] See above, p. 146 ff. It seems that a thief was precluded more by tacit understanding than by open questioning.

[2] V., iv., pp. 298-299; 337-340, and *passim*.

[3] For the relations of preceptor and pupil, see MV., i., 35, 6-24; i., 26, 1-11: and see above, p. 141 ff.; p. 247 ff.

Preaching thus came to be looked upon as a recognised duty for those who had any aptitude for it; for although those who had expressed their own *aññā* had completed their work for themselves, if they could they still had to give the Dhamma to others.

The importance of preaching as a factor in the spread of Buddhism has been somewhat neglected. There is doubtless a large amount of truth in the description of primitive Buddhism as a primarily contemplative system, in which only " il reste un effort, un pur effort vers le nirvāna, un chemin fait de méditations du type rationaliste et égoïste ";[1] and in which each individual tries to win nirvāna for himself alone, regardless of his fellow-men and the value of mutual help.[2] It may be that " ce chemin est le chemin de tous les anciens moines ";[3] but these accusations against the earlier school of Buddhist thought, sometimes called the Hīnayāna or the Lesser Vehicle, would be somewhat mitigated if the necessity for learning from teachers how and upon what to meditate were kept more in mind; no less than the Tathāgata's compassionate spirit,[4] for example, to his followers; or than the missionary spirit burning to disseminate the Dhamma. And further, by comparison, the later Mahāyāna, or Greater Vehicle, would not then appear to be the only compassionate way, the only one capable of leading all men to salvation.[5] For a definite part of the Buddhist programme was to show the Way by preaching about it. Nor did the recognition for this necessity creep into the system later. The moment that Gotama had decided that he would tell the many-folk of the new knowledge conveyed to him at the time of his Enlightenment, he pondered over the form in which it had been presented to him, changed it into a doctrine which would be more palatable to the people, and without loss of time began to tell them of his new knowledge. He also sent others out to repeat to all who would listen the wonderful aspect of the truth which he had grasped.

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[1] L. de la Vallée Poussin, *Nirvāna*, Paris, 1925, p. 20.

[2] L. de la Vallée Poussin, Art. " Nature (Buddhist)," *E.R.E* : " Altruism, of course, is not insisted upon in the Little Vehicle, but it is always *sous entendu*."

[3] L. de la Vallée Poussin, *Nirvāna*, Paris, 1925, p. 20.

[4] Saṃy. Nik., i., 4, § 5, he, " for every creature doth compassion feel." *Cf.* Iti-vuttaka, 39 ; Saṃy. Nik., vi., 1, § 1.

[5] For an account of the pre-eminence of the Mahāyāna see A. B. Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy*, Oxford, 1923, p. 259.

After the women were admitted to the Order they did not lag far behind the men in preaching, but rendered much valuable service in this respect. They went into the women's parts of the houses, and also gave public discourses in the open.

Preaching went on all the year round. During Vassa the almspeople preached to the lay-people at the place where the rain-retreat was being kept. For the remaining nine months of the year they were constantly travelling from vihāra to vihāra, preaching the Dhamma as they went. It must have been an onerous task, for all travelling had to be done on foot. Almswomen were allowed to journey in bullock-carts or sedan chairs only if they were ill[1] and unable to walk. When well, they were not allowed to ride or drive in any kind of vehicle.[2] This pācittiya rule had been made as a result of the complaints of the laity that the six almswomen had been driving in a chariot (*yāna*) like the women of the world (*gihikāmabhoginiyo*). This restriction must have placed an irksome restraint on their activities and pleasures. It reflects but another instance of the determination of the laity to keep the recluses as different from themselves in as many respects as possible; and what the laity wished had usually the supremacy of a command. Without their goodwill the Order could not have been sustained.

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[1] CV., x., 21.

[2] V., iv., pp. 338, 339. The word used for vehicle, *yāna*, can mean an elephant or a horse, or it may be a palanquin carried by men. The force of the rule lies in the prohibition to ride or drive. *Cf.* below, p. 376, note 1.

Several famous women preachers took part in the dissemination of the Dhamma. Sukkā became an eminent teacher, and she "with a great company seated round her, taught the Doctrine in such wise that she seemed to be giving them sweet mead to drink, and sprinkling them with ambrosia. And they all listened to her, rapt, motionless and intent."[1] Paṭācārā, versed in the Vinaya, and Mahāpajāpatī[2] both made many converts. Dhammadinnā came to be called first among the almswomen who could preach.[3] On one occasion,[4] when questioned by Visākha, her former husband who had remained in the world as a lay-disciple, while she had joined the Order of Almswomen and gained arahanship, she answered him fully and unhesitatingly on many and various of the tenets. He related the conversation to Gotama, who replied, as it is recorded: "Learning and great wisdom dwell in Dhammadinnā. Had you asked me, I should have made answer precisely as she did. Her answer was correct and you should treasure it up accordingly."

This story has its parallel in one recorded of the almswoman of Kajangalā.[5] Some lay-people of that town asked her to expound an utterance of Gotama to them. She confessed that she had never heard him, nor any of his famous disciples preach, but undertook to do the best she could. At the end of her discourse the lay-people went to Gotama, and told him what she had said. He praised her to them in the same words that he is said to have accorded to Dhammadinnā. Such unstinted tributes as these from the Teacher, no less than Dhammadinnā's and the Kajangalā almswoman's own prowess, further justify the admission of women into the Order.

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[1] Therīgāthā Cmy. on xxxiv. Saṃy. Nik., x., § 9, (1); and *cf.* above, p. 168.

[2] See above, p. 201 ff.

[3] Therīgāthā Cmy. on xii.; Ang., i., p. 25.

[4] Majjhima, i., 299 ff.; Therīgāthā Cmy. on xii.

[5] Ang., v., p. 54 ff.

It is recorded that Pasēnadi sat beside the almswoman Khemā[1] as his teacher,[2] and asked her some questions. In accordance with her reputation as a brilliant talker (*citta-kathī*) she gave him a long dissertation on unrevealed matters, namely the existence or non-existence after death of the Tathāgata. When later the King questioned the Master on the same topics he was amazed to find that his explanations and those given by Khemā harmonised and were not inconsistent.

There was also Thullanandā, whose teaching fell not only on the ears of the many-folk: it is twice recorded that King Pasēnadi also heard her preach, and on each occasion offered to give her anything which she liked to name.[3] In the cold weather she chose the woollen cloak he was wearing, and in the hot weather his flaxen cloak: and he gave them to her. These marks of royal approbation argue that he was favourably impressed by what he heard. In the Vinaya it is three times said that she was an outstanding (*paṭṭhā*) teacher of the Dhamma,[4] and twice that she was a famous reciter (*bhāṇikā*).[5] These epithets are also used to describe Bhaddā Kāpīlanī; who is further said to have become very eminent and effective (*uḷāra-sambhāvitā*).[6]

In trying to reconstruct the days of the first women preachers, we are tantalised by the documents, so matter-of-fact, so compact, and yet so bald and superficial. There is no hint that either Gotama or his chief or lesser disciples ever suggested that the almswomen could not co-operate with them in making known the truth among the lay-followers; or in binding them to it in ever more steadfast devotion, or in helping to capture and increase their interest, loyalty and friendly intercourse. Yet in this large and important work we long for a true and detailed account of the opinions the women held of each other as preachers, and of the interest which they must have taken in each other's careers. They may not have heard one another preach, but each would have had a reputation, some would have been brighter lights than others. Yet nothing has survived of their attitude towards one another's success, except two instances of unpardonable pettiness, attributed to Thullanandā. According to the records, she could not restrain her anger and jealousy when she thought people preferred Bhaddā Kāpīlanī as a preacher to herself.[1] On another occasion when this lady came to visit her on business at Sāvatthi, Thullanandā became petulant because she herself was not waited on first.[2] Even if she were only a peg on which to hang peccadilloes, and not an historical personage, the peccadilloes themselves had a basis in fact. But surely such behaviour is not the criterion of the standard usual among the almswomen. Were there no others who could and did take a more open-hearted and generous pleasure in recognising that their own members were being well received as preachers by the laity, as they undoubtedly were? These are the kind of questions which the Vinaya raises, but to which it gives no definite answers.

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[1] See above, p. 169.

[2] Saṃy. Nik., xliv., 10, § 1.

[3] V., iv., pp. 255-256.

[4] V., iv., pp. 254-257.

[5] V., iv., p. 285, 290.

[6] V., iv., p. 290.

If they gained success among the laity it would have been very largely because they preached with faithfulness all that they had learned of the Dhamma. For, the Doctrine of the Middle Way was calculated to make an appeal to the average man, because he could see in it a teaching which he could follow. It was a practical guide to the living of the good life. The outlines of the way of wisdom, of the path of virtue to be followed by taught and teacher survive in words ascribed to Gotama: "Let a man neither give himself over to pleasures of sense—which are low, pagan, vulgar, ignoble and unprofitable—nor yet let him give himself over to self-mortification—which is painful, ignoble and unprofitable. To the exclusion of both these extremes the Tathāgata has discovered a middle course which gives vision and understanding, and conduces to tranquillity, insight, enlightenment and nirvāna. Let him understand both appreciation and depreciation, and having understood them, let him not appreciate nor depreciate but preach the Doctrine."[1]

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[1] V., iv., p. 290.

[2] V., iv., p. 292.

This is the teaching of the Noble Eightfold Way, the follower of which is said to be a good man, but he who instigates others to follow it is said to be a better man still.[2] To "preach the doctrine which is lovely in the beginning, lovely in the middle and lovely at the ending . . . to proclaim a consummate, perfect and pure life of holiness"[3] far and wide in the land, and to enlist more and more followers were among Gotama's most cherished ideals. Naturally not even those women who responded so magnificently to his high hope, taking their place alongside the men as teachers, and numbering among themselves some of the highest rank, could devote every hour of the day to preaching and to making known the truth. The occasions for preaching were largely regulated by the times at which the congregations of laity could be gathered together. Hence these women would have had some time to spare. Still more would those have who had no aptitude for preaching, and who were, even under a system which stressed the power of the will, under no moral or disciplinary obligation to do so.

Although life in the Order was divested of many interests and pursuits, and preaching was not regarded as a duty incumbent on every member, there still remained the arduous daily work of meditation. It was essential that every member should engage upon this, and should confer upon it an uninterrupted attention. It consisted of a series of pure acts of mind, unsupported as a rule by any material objects by means of which to focus concentration. It was considered really hard work—work which absorbed the whole being and mentality of the thinker. By this spiritual endeavour, by the determination to be rapt without restlessness of mind, by the suppression of anger and perilous memories, while yet allowing no torpor of the wits,[1] rather than by rites, sacrifices, oblations, prayers and the bestowal of alms, could that Insight be won which leads to the cool, calm, blissful, sorrow-free state of Nirvāna:

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[1] Majjhima, iii., 230.
[2] Ang., ii., p. 221.
[3] MV., i., 11, 1.

> " He who doth strenuously meditate,
> His shall it be to win the bliss supreme."[2]

Meditation, purging " the heart of besetting states of consciousness," and exterminating the will towards the enduring manifold of objects,[3] enlivening it towards walking onward on the Path to Salvation, could be undertaken whilst walking to and fro; or while seated in the usual upright posture either during the day or during the first and last watches of the night; or it could be undertaken " in the middle watch of the night as you lie couched lion-like (*sīha-seyyaṃ*) on your right side, foot resting on foot,[4] mindful and self-possessed, with your thoughts set on the appointed time to get up."[5]

The almswomen, unlike the almsmen, were not allowed to repair to burial-places, there the easier to master the fundamental notion of Impermanence. Yet, although placed at a disadvantage by reason of their sex, they were not entirely precluded from contemplating the symbols of impermanence and decay. It is, for example, said that Abhayā "went one day to the Cool Grove to contemplate on the basis of some foul thing,"[1] on a corpse or human bones.

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[1] Saṃy. Nik., iv., 3, § 5.

[2] *Ibid.*, i., 4, § 6.

[3] *Ibid.*, i., 4, § 4.

[4] *Cf.* Saṃy. Nik., i., 4, § 8 ; iv., 1, § 7 ; XXXV., iii., 2, § 120 ; XXXV., iv., 5, § 198 (2) ; XXXV., iv., 5, § 202 (6).

[5] Majjhima, i., 273 ; 274 and same as in note 3.

Dwelling in complete solitude was not feasible for women; and dwelling at the foot of a tree was interdicted.[2] Whoever adopted a forest life was guilty of a dukkata offence. Almswomen were prevented by their sex from "wandering alone like a rhinoceros" in the depths of the forests, from climbing alone to the mountain crests, and from retreating into caves. They had instead to seek the safe shelter of the Vihāra. It has been said that in seeking God or the supreme good, man has to lead a solitary existence.[3] Although this suggests an extreme view, doubtless some solitude is advantageous in the search; and possibly the end may be most swiftly attained by leading a life completely isolated from one's fellows during some prolonged stretches of time. If an almswoman went away from the Vihāra for long or for far, she would always have at least one other almswoman with her. She therefore never had the same chances as the almsmen for becoming rapt in meditation, in that concentration, which (in one passage, too seldom noticed) is said to be causally associated with happiness and not, as is so often the case, with sorrow.[4]

Nevertheless, hemmed in as they were by the dangers and difficulties consequent upon their sex, it was not impossible for almswomen sometimes to escape alone for solitary meditation, in which

> "If there be none in front, nor none behind
> Be found, is one alone and in the woods,
> Exceeding pleasànt doth his life become."[5]

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[1] Therīgāthā Cmy. on xxvii.

[2] CV., x., 23 and see above, p. 154 ff.

[3] Whitehead, *Religion in the Making*, Cambridge, 1927, p. 7.

[4] Saṃy. Nik., xii., 3, § 23.

[5] Theragāthā, verse 537; *cf.* Samy. Nik., i., 2, § 5.

For example, it is said that Āḷavikā[1] "entered the Dark Wood, seeking solitude," but that Māra, the Evil One, "desiring to make her desist from being alone went up to her and asked, 'What profiteth thee then thy loneliness?'" Some went into the Forest for the day-sojourn[2] after the begging round and meal. There is mention of several almswomen who, plunging into the depths of the Dark Wood, "sat down at the root of a certain tree for the day-sojourn,"[3] and Dantikā[4] "passed into the forest depths" and there ordered all her heart.

These periods for earnest meditation must have seemed all too short to the intent and serious almswomen, for they had to be broken into by the necessary return to the vihāra. Sometimes, perhaps, on her return, the almswoman might have been able to gain the privacy of her own cell unobserved, there to continue her meditations; for one of the advantages of the right exercise of the use of lodging was the possibility of the enjoyment of seclusion.[5] But if there were communal duties to be discharged, such as overseeing the erection of new buildings,[6] further meditation was precluded.

As true devotees the almswomen should have refrained from envying the greater liberty of the almsmen. It was a tax on their magnanimity, for they could not have failed to notice the freedom allowed to the almsmen to wander "like lonely lion faring"[7] week after week in uninterrupted solitude: "alone when eating, alone when sleeping, alone when walking, let a man strongly control himself and take his pleasure in the forest glade."[8] As an example of the favourable results which might be achieved by this practice, it is described how the bandit, Angulimāla, having recently been converted, or having acquired the "Noble Birth," and "dwelling alone and aloof won the prize in quest of which young men go forth from the home to homelessness as Pilgrims, that prize of prizes which crowns the highest life."[1] Women had to strive for this prize without the life-giving solitude; and its absence was considerably the greatest physical hindrance in their way to the attainment of arahanship. Recognising this, when meditating they would make all the more strenuous and unremitting efforts. If time were short, concentration must be intense and fervent, "the mind ever rightly fixed."[2] Reliance must be put in the self alone, since little or no help was to be had from external sources. But everything was within the almswoman's own self: the stimulus, the will to concentrate, the altar[3] and the refuge, if she could but find them. Thus she would mount ever upwards towards arahanship, the nominal goal of all who entered the Order.

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[1] Therīgāthā, Appendix, i., p. 180.

[2] The word *divā-vihārāya* means literally "for the day sojourn," Saṃy. Nik., v., § 2, note; Therīgāthā, lix.

[3] Therīgāthā, Appendix, ii.-x.; and *cf.* Saṃy. Nik., v., 1-10.

[4] Therīgāthā, xxxii., verse 50.

[5] Majjhima, i., 10.

[6] V., iv., p. 211.

[7] Saṃy. Nik., i., 3, § 10.

[8] Dhp., 305.

As no word of yearning for a more prolonged or for a more complete solitude escapes from these women, and as many of them are said to have gained arahanship, we may argue that they resigned themselves to their lot, and supported themselves with the belief that in their nature there was no inherent or insuperable barrier which would resist their efforts to reach the goal. This was the ideal set before all the entrants; but although the ideal may be the same for every man, not all may be ripe to achieve it. It remains now to see the provision made for those who found that they had no aptitude for continuing on the paths.

As Buddhist thought in common with other Eastern thought was permeated by the idea of karma, so no hard-and-fast rules could be laid down for the conduct of a man's life. With its penetrating insight Buddhism realised that individual lives cannot be moulded on a single pattern and that allowances must be made for differences: it was thought that, to some extent, these were explained by the working of karma. Hence no vows for remaining in the Order for life were taken by those applying for full membership. If members felt that they could not continue in the discipline they were free to " throw off the robes,"[1] and return to the lower state.[2] The number of recorded cases of almsmen who adopted this course is greater than that of the almswomen, amongst whom, judging by the paucity of references, it was extremely rare. Caṇḍakālī's threat to leave the Order,[3] and her rejection of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha had given rise to the regulation which decreed that anyone so minded must be spoken to three times; if still unrepentant she must be spoken to by the Council. This was presumably to insure that in taking this definite step an almswoman was acting from a well-considered judgment, and was not merely indulging a whim. For once having left the Order she might find it difficult to be reinstated even if she asked.[4] The Order opposed an impetuous abandonment of the Precepts, as much as it opposed a hasty entry. Both steps might lead to the discouraged sense of having acted in error and to the torture of remorse. They might also lead to internal dissensions in the Order. Caṇḍakālī's threat went no further. Besides this, there are not more than three recorded cases of women who actually left the Order. There was Fat Tissā[5] who returned to the household life. Another almswoman who first abandoned the precepts and then threw off the robes is mentioned in the Vinaya.[1] She probably returned to the lay-life. The third is also recorded in the Vinaya.[2] She is said to have joined the Titthiyas, though still wearing the orange-coloured robe.

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[1] Majjhima, ii., 103; *cf.* Majjhima, i., 392, and Theragāthā, cclv.

[2] Cmy. on Saṃy. Nik., vii., 1, § 9.

[3] Saṃy. Nik., vii., 1, § 9. "Only within burneth the fire I kindle . . . the heart the altar."

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[1] *Cf.* Dhp. Cmy. on verse 1. Where the novice on being made to confess to having violated the precept of chastity was " overwhelmed with remorse, removed his yellow robe (and) clothed himself in the garb of a householder."

[2] *I.e.*, the state of a layman, *hīnāy'āvattitva*.

[3] V., iv., pp. 235, 236.

[4] CV., x., 26, 1, 2.

[5] Saṃy. Nik., xvi., §§ 10, 11. See below, p. 297.

There was yet another way of leaving the Order, and that was by suicide. It is impossible to say when the notion of suicide originated or when this means of escape began to be used. According to Keith[3] the idea itself is not mentioned in the text of the Brāmaṇas, whether or not it existed then; but he maintains that in certain interpretations of the sacrifice the idea is expressed in a less developed form. By the Buddhist period the idea was fully developed, thus supporting the view that it was not unknown to the Jains or to the ascetic sects which preceded its rise. The most common methods of committing suicide among the Buddhist religious devotees appear, indeed, to have had points in common with both. It is said that the majority of the sects used a rapid means of self-destruction; one of the most usual was for a man to throw himself from a mountain top.[4] The Jains alone thought this was too violent, too crude: it would lead to the rebirth of the suicide as a demon. They held that they must renounce all desire, including the desire for death. All they could do was to practise starvation over a number of years, usually twelve, patiently waiting for the end to come.[5] In Buddhism, on the other hand, speedy and drastic means were permitted if called for; then the knife or rope was used. But gentler methods were also known, as is suggested in Mahāpajāpatī's plea to Gotama to permit her to die finally.[1] Once having gained his permission she could resolve to die, merely by an effort of the will "loosening the *Sankhāras* of life" and so slipping quietly out of it.

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[1] CV., x., 26, 1.

[2] CV., x., 26, 2.

[3] Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, Harvard, 1925, p. 459.

[4] Art. "Suicide," *E.R.E.*

[5] Meyer, *Hindu Tales*, London, 1909, p. 115.

It would seem strange that suicide should be allowed, for the third of the four rules "involving defeat" reads: "Whatsoever almsman . . . shall utter the praises of death or incite another to self-destruction . . . he too has fallen into defeat, he is no longer in communion."[2] Although the responsibility for the suicide was attached to the prompter, who therefore resembled an assassin, and not to the actor, this rule might be taken as an indication of the Buddhist attitude towards suicide,[3] and indeed towards death. The Buddhist attitude towards death was not so rigidly exclusive as that formulated by Spinoza centuries later in his sixty-seventh proposition: "A free man thinks of nothing less than of death, and his wisdom is not a meditation upon death but upon life."[4] Meditation upon death was encouraged,[5] both so as to allay its terrors by keeping it as a stock-in-trade of thought; for only they who do not meditate upon the certainty of death fear it:[6] and also so as to render the notion of Impermanence explicit to each individual. This was to be achieved by his consideration of particular instances of it, for "it is on occasion of particular experiences that we become aware of the general law which their connections exemplify."[7] Contemplation of death and of the round of becomings should lead to final peace (*accanta-santi*)[1] through the rejection of the bait of all the worlds,[2] which is none other than sense desires.

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[1] Apadāna, vol. ii. Therīapadāna, No. 17, p. 542; and see below, p. 310.

[2] Pārājika Dhamma, 3, V., i., p. 4.

[3] E. J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History*, London, 1927, p. 275.

[4] Spinoza, *Ethic*, trans. Hale White and Amelia Stirling, Oxford, 1910, p. 235.

[5] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 174.

[6] Jātaka Cmy. on 105.

[7] B. Russell, *Problems of Philosophy*, p. 115.

Identical statements about death survive from three arahans in the Theragāthā.[3] It appears that because "with thought of death I dally not, nor yet delight in living," indifferent to non-existence, indifferent to existence, they had already eliminated the normal responses of their mortal frame, and were emptied of interest in its fate. Because they had realised that "All is Impermanent" they were in no further need, like those less near the goal, of using meditation upon death as a means of grasping the universality of that truth.

If life for the zealous Buddhist almspeople consisted in gaining arahanship, when this was accomplished they might argue that there was no further point in living, and so decide to die. The great danger of allowing religious suicide in a general way would appear to be that someone might commit it prematurely thinking that he was an arahan.[4] His action would then increase his karma and would in no wise diminish it, and hence he would be worse off than if he had waited for death to overtake him. As is pointed out by L. de la Vallée Poussin, the action of certain almsmen and almswomen who cut their throats is praised.[5] He doubtless refers to Vakkali[6] and Godhika[7] and to Channa,[8] of whom the Lord is said to have said that he was blameless in using the knife upon himself, since he did not divest himself of this body because he wanted another.

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[1] Saṃy. Nik., i., 1, §§ 3, 4; ii., 2, § 9. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] Theragāthā, verses 606, 607, 654, 655, 685, 686.

[4] L. de la Vallée Poussin, "Quelques Observations sur la Suicide dans le Bouddhisme ancien. *Bull. de L'Académie belgique.* Classe des Lettres, 1919, pp. 685 ff.

[5] L. de la Vallée Poussin, *Nirvāna*, Paris, 1925, p. 22.

[6] Theragāthā Cmy. on ccv.; Saṃy Nik., xxii., § 87, (5); and see Dhp. Cmy. on verse 57.

[7] Saṃy. Nik., iv., 3, § 3, Dhp. Cmy. on verse 57.

[8] Majjhima, iii., 226; Saṃy. Nik., XXV., ii., 4, § 87.

There are no records of almswomen who committed suicide. And Sīhā's[1] is the only given case of a woman's attempted suicide. She did not belong to that small group whose members thought of death because they believed that their task was accomplished. She was driven to think of it from despair of ever gaining arahanship. Disconsolate after having striven for seven weary years, at last she exclaimed, "Better for me a friendly gallows tree," and took a rope and plunged into the wood, bound the rope round a bough and flung it round her neck. But at the very moment that she was preparing to tighten it and so destroy herself, her heart was set at liberty, and she exclaimed *cittaṃ vimucci me*.

These then were the ways by which members could decide, sometimes like Mahāpajāpatī with sanction, and sometimes without, to leave the Order.

The question next arises, were they ever ejected? Was there anything corresponding to excommunication, by means of which the Order could rid itself of undesirable characters? No lists of cases meriting expulsion are given for the women novices or ordained members as they are for the almsmen.[2] Although it is difficult to believe that they were entirely different in this highly important respect, yet as far as the records show only one woman was expelled from the Order. Unsatisfactory as is this story of the meddlesome Mettiyā[3] as a piece of direct evidence, indirectly it is valuable in intimating that expulsion of the almswomen was resorted to if circumstances demanded it. The almsmen declared to her that there was one among them who was a centre of danger and worry and deceit; and they got her to act as a go-between between them and the Lord. She accused the maligned almsman in such a way that he was forced to clear himself by saying: " Even in sleep I have never followed the lusts of the flesh." It is recorded that Gotama said: " Expel the officious almswoman Mettiyā,[1] and pay attention to the almsmen," and that the almsmen expelled her.

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[1] Therīgāthā, xl.

[2] MV., i., 60; CV., i., 13-17.

[3] V., iii., p. 162.

The whole record reads as a distortion of what Gotama would have said. He was never impatient or impetuous and only took drastic steps after serious consideration. He would not have expelled her simply for being officious, for this was not one of the grounds meriting expulsion embodied in any of the four Pārājika rules. According to these, an almswoman could only be expelled if, with physical attraction on both sides, she had accepted contact of any kind from a man, either with the hands or otherwise from the collar-bone to the knee; if she had let him lift her robe,[2] or enter a secret place with her; if she had concealed an offence or made light of it when she should have shown up the guilty party;[3] or if she had followed or imitated an almsman who had been legally suspended for some fault and who had ignored the teaching.[4]

The story of the expulsion of Mettiyā, who had committed none of these offences, reads more as if the monk-editors were determined to degrade the women, to point a strong moral to interference, to keep them ever more and more at arm's length, and not to cooperate with them.

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[1] Lit. " This meddlesome almswoman is to be swept away."

[2] V., iv., p. 210 ff. This is Pār. I., Pār. IV. has the same intention, V., iv., p. 220.

[3] V., iv., p. 216.

[4] V., iv., p. 218.

CHAPTER IV (*continued*)

LIFE IN THE ORDER. PART III

Intercommunication of almsmen and almswomen.—Constitution of audiences at the discourses.—Equality of almsmen and almswomen.—Forms of address used.

FROM the story of the meddlesome Mettiyā, and from the records concerned with the regulations for washing garments and for eating, and from some of the others already referred to, it will be apparent that a certain amount of intercommunication between members of the two Orders was possible and permissible. An attempt must now be made to give some idea of the extent to which almsmen and almswomen might legitimately associate, and of the bounds beyond which association was condemned.

The year for the Buddhist almspeople fell into two divisions: the three consecutive rainy months of Vassa, and the other nine months during which there was touring from vihāra to vihāra. During the months of Vassa it was incumbent on the almsmen and the almswomen to remain domiciled in one fixed abode. In the Bhikkhunīvibhanga it is recorded that laymen complained that some almswomen were going on tour at either end of the rainy season (*antovassa*).[1] They said: "How can these almswomen go about crushing the young green corn and destroying weakly creatures?" Public opinion disliked the idea, running counter to the doctrine of *ahiṃsā* (non-injury, humanity), of the destruction of the teeming insect life and of life that was weak (*ekindriya jīva*)[2] and of the destruction of the young green corn more than it disliked the idea of lack of shelter for the almspeople during the rains.

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[1] V., iv., p. 296.

[2] *Indriya*, lit. a faculty.

In consequence of these objections it was made a pācittiya offence to tour at either end of the rains; but exceptions were made of touring for seven days, and of going forth if driven out by anybody.[1]

Almspeople usually spent the other nine months of the year in journeying from place to place. This rule was explicitly made for the almswomen because certain lay-people were shocked at some indolent almswomen who, besides keeping Vassa during the monsoons, also kept it during the hot and cold seasons.[2] Hence it was asserted that unless an almswoman set out on tour five or six days after the termination of Vassa she committed a pācittiya offence. During these nine months she must not remain supine. The laity might live in one and the same place all the year round, but a recluse's life should include rather more hardships and different responsibilities.

The rules for association probably held for the whole year. In addition to these there were some extra regulations, which only applied during Vassa and not during the rest of the year. The set of rules connected with visits from almsmen to almswomen during Vassa might be interpreted to mean that during this time the Orders were segregated and members were allowed no other intercommunication than that which the rules prescribed. It is not clear whether there were any special rules for segregation during the rains to correspond to these special rules for visits. Many of the records do not state whether the association to which they refer took place during the rains or not. But if the vihāras where the almspeople were respectively keeping the Rain-Retreat were, as must have often been the case, in the same neighbourhood, close together, just outside the city walls, would not recluses have met, possibly on the almsround, again at meal-time at the houses of the regular lay-supporters, and possibly also later in the day at the discourses or teaching? Are we to believe that during this period they were not allowed access to one another's ārāmas? The difficulty of the whole question is increased by the vagueness of the chronology attaching to the growth of the rules.[1] Although the exact sequence in which they were made is not ascertainable, it appears that the process was continuous, that a greater liberty of association was allowed at the beginning, but that this was curtailed as time went on, as it more and more came to be thought necessary to stultify some of the common factors of human nature by a monastic moulding.

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[1] *Cf.* MV., iii., 1, 1-3, where a similar ruling for the almsmen was made.

[2] V., iv., p. 297.

Turning first to the rules which were intended to apply exclusively to possibilities for association during the rains, it appears that however stringent were the conditions of the retreat, the almswomen should not have felt entirely cut off from the almsmen, recognised throughout to be the more important of the two Sanghas. For although according to Buddhaghosa, the almsmen (and doubtless the almswomen also) from the time when the custom of keeping Vassa was first begun were "to say loudly once or twice 'I enter upon Vassa in this vihāra for these three months,'"[2] and were to inhabit it as their permanent abode during this time, yet they could leave it on urgent business. The discipline was relaxed so that almsmen could go to the almswoman "if the thing (you go for) can be accomplished within seven days and if you are sent for."[3] In a document, placed slightly later, permission was given to the almsmen to visit other almsmen and also almswomen, sikkamānās, sāmaṇeras, sāmaṇerīs, the mother and the father "even if you are not sent for, and much more if you are sent for,"[1] provided that the return could be made within seven days. The almsman Vaḍḍha seems to have availed himself of these privileges.[2] One day, feeling the responsibility of office, he went without his cloak through the almswomen's quarters to see his mother. She was evidently a disciplinarian with great faith in the Order, for her reprimand to him for apparently falling away from the strenuous life acted upon him like a goad. He went back to his vihāra, and after concentration attained arahanship. The novice Rāhula,[3] too, is said to have gone to see his mother, also a member of the Order.

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[1] The texts were only written down in Ceylon when there had been war there; the almsmen became afraid that they would all be killed, and decided to perpetuate the teaching in writing; even after that they continued to use the oral method.

[2] MV., iii., 1, 3. Vinaya Texts Translation, vol. i., p. 299, note 1.

[3] MV., iii., 5, 4; and *cf.* iii., 7, 2.

Although there is nothing to indicate whether these two visits took place during the rains or not, it is plain from other sources that the contact between the two Orders was not broken during Vassa. For example there was always possibility of an unexpected visit from an almsman, and there was the possibility of sending for an almsman. But probably almswomen might only ask for a visit on some weighty and not on any trivial matter. To guard against abuse, these matters were set down.[4] They are the same as those justifying almsmen's visits to almsmen. They gave sanction for an almsman to visit an almswoman when she was sick; when inward struggles had befallen her; when doubts of conscience had arisen in her mind; when she had taken to a false doctrine; when she had committed a grave offence and ought to be sentenced to the manatta discipline, there being no Parivāsa discipline for women;[5] when she ought to be sentenced to recommence penal discipline; when she was to be rehabilitated; when the Sangha was going to proceed against her by the tajjaniyakamma (Act of Rebuke), the nissayakamma (Act of Subordination or of Protection), the pabbājaniyakamma (Act of Banishment out of the place where the scandal had been caused, not out of the Order, CV., I., 13, 6), the paṭisāraṇiyakamma (Act of Reconciliation), or the ukkhepaniyakamma (Act of Suspension); or when it had instituted one of these proceedings against her.[1] This list, in spite of other records, such as that of the almswomen who sent a messenger to the almsmen to ask for the loan of some bedding,[2] suggests considerable opportunity for visits from the almsmen. In addition the importance attached to the due performance of ceremonies before both the Sanghas, makes it highly probable that in the beginning there was frequent intercommunication between them.

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[1] MV., iii., 7, 2.

[2] Theragāthā, ccii.; Therīgāthā, lxii.

[3] Jātaka Cmy. on 281.

[4] MV., iii., 12-20.

[5] MV., iii., 16, note 2; *cf.* CV., ii. Parivāsa discipline is going back to the beginning of the probationary period.

In certain conditions the almswomen were allowed to go into the almsmen's ārāma. Some almswomen on one occasion caused the pious almswomen to complain, because they had entered the almsmen's ārāma without having obtained the permission of the almsmen.[3] Hence it was made into a pācittiya offence for an almswoman to enter a pleasaunce without asking permission. It is said that this was put forward by the Lord for the training of the almswomen. This restriction led to difficulties, for the almswomen, imagining that they might not enter the park when the almsmen were absent, remained outside. The almsmen had all been away; on their return they asked why the park had not been swept and food provided. The almswomen replied that the Lord had said that they might not go in without having obtained permission. Hence—all for the greater convenience and comfort of the almsmen—a new pācittiya rule was made to the effect that if one almsman were present, with his consent almswomen might enter the ārāma. But if an almswoman entered a park (in this connection called a *sabhikkhuka ārāma*,[1] which, according to the Old Commentary, is one where the almsmen dwell at the foot of a tree) without leave, knowing that the almsmen were there, that was a pācittiya offence. But how could they get permission to go in, if they were not allowed to go in without leave if the almsmen were there? Reasonable as the Vinaya so often is, here it does not fail them. It said that it is blameless for an almswoman to enter looking for someone to ask. It was also said to be blameless for them to go and look for others to join them, knowing that they were there; for them to go in if there was a way through the park; or if they were ill or overcome by misfortune.

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[1] These are explained in CV., i.

[2] CV., x., 16, 1.

[3] V., iv., pp. 306-308.

As time went on, the whole tendency came to be to draw up more stringent rules, apparently with the intention of allowing as little casual intercommunication as possible between the members of the two Orders, even during the dispatch of necessary tasks. The exchange of food appears to have come under no ban; but a regulation, concerned not with the quality, nor with the quantity of the food taken, but with some of the attendant circumstances of taking, made it a saṅghādisesa offence for an almswoman, if she were sexually inclined towards an almsman, to take food from him if he had the same kind of feelings with regard to her.[2]

Several rules connected with robes came into force. Unrelated almsmen and almswomen could exchange robes;[3] but it was a pācittiya offence for an almsman to give a *cīvara* to an almswoman[4] who was not related. A certain almsman had said to an almswoman with whom he had become friendly through going for alms to the same place, "This is my share (in the robe-distribution), will you have some?" "Yes," she said, "I am badly off for robes." He gave her a robe. The pious almsmen complained of this, with the usual result. A nissaggiya offence was incurred if an almsman received the gift of a *cīvara* from an almswoman.[1] This rule may have been made as much to check the greed of the almsmen, as to prevent an undesirable amount of meetings between members of the two Orders. If many almsmen should have come to be like Udāyi, as a result of whose conduct this rule was formed, they would not have hesitated to ask for what they wanted from the almswomen. He was so pertinacious in begging Uppalavaṇṇā for her *cīvara*, that although she explained that women do not get anything easily, and that this was her last, her fifth *cīvara*,[2] he pleaded for it until out of the kindness of her heart she gave it to him. The houses of the laity formed a common meeting-ground, where it would have been possible to conduct this kind of negotiations.

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[1] V., iv., p. 307.

[2] V., iv., pp. 232, 233.

[3] Pācittiya Dhamma, 25; Nissaggiya Pācittiya Dhamma, 5.

[4] V., iv., pp. 59, 121. In the record placed the earlier, it is said "if she is of no relation to him." *Cf.* above, p. 225.

Besides the giving of robes, the washing of robes also became subject to various regulations. It was said that robes were not to be washed (by the almswomen for the almsmen) unless they were related;[3] old garments were not to be washed, dyed or beaten by the almswomen for the almsmen, unless they were related,[4] for on one occasion Udāyi had had sexual intercourse, called the second trouble of almsmen and brahmins,[5] with the woman who had been his former wife, and she had become with child.[6] Nor were black goats' hair garments to be washed, dyed or bleached by the almswomen and the almsmen together:[7] a rule which resulted from Mahāpajāpatī's complaints.

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[1] V., iii., p. 209.

[2] The Cmy. sheds no light here. Five probably had to last for some definite period of time.

[3] Nissaggiya Pācittiya Dhamma, 4.

[4] V., iii., pp. 205, 206.

[5] Ang., ii., p. 53.

[6] V., iii., pp. 205, 206.

[7] V., iii., pp. 234, 235.

Gotama is recorded to have asked her whether the almswomen were being zealous and strenuous and putting forth effort as a habit. In reply she countered with the question, "How can they be anything of the sort?" For, she told him, the almsmen were washing their black goats' hair garments and dyeing them with the almswomen, and the almswomen were doing the same thing. Consequently they were neglecting the higher duties.

The sewing of robes by the almswomen for the almsmen also came to be considered an offence.[1] Decent modest behaviour was to be kept in view, and the means taken to engender this was to shut the doors on dalliance, and to reduce the chances for misconduct. Many of the almsmen and almswomen were too little experienced in commanding themselves, too shameless to heed the responsibilities of a life of monasticism, to be trusted. Hence the increasing array of rules. How should a frivolous almswoman hasten on towards her higher duties, unless she were disciplined into circumspect conduct? The story of Gotama's rebuke to Moliya-Phagguna[2] for associating too much with the almswomen further corroborates the possibility of meeting. It was followed by the reprimand which such behaviour came consistently to incur: that this kind of behaviour would not do. Moliya-Phagguna appears to have been on such friendly terms with the almswomen, that he became much annoyed if he heard any of the other almsmen speaking against them: while the almswomen on their side became much annoyed if they heard any of the almsmen talking against him. In their meetings with the almsmen, therefore, there must have been opportunities for common gossip; attention to religious discourses and to the ceremonies of the Sanghas could not have occupied their minds to the exclusion of everything else. After all, though nominally ascetics, they were human.

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[1] V., iv., p. 61.

[2] Majjhima, i., 122, 123. He seems later to have renounced the training and turned to lower things. Saṃy. Nik., xii., 4, § 32 (2).

Further, a householder of Sāvatthi and his son and wife all entered the Order,[1] but "they were unable to remain apart. Whether in the monastery or in the convent of almswomen they would sit down by themselves and spend the day chatting together." The pious almsmen and almswomen are said to have been annoyed at these meetings. The former told Gotama; he exhorted the miscreants to hold nothing dear, but to apply themselves to their religious duties.

Some went even further than sitting and chatting. For example, the almsmen Sudinna[2] and Udāyi[3] cohabited with their former wives, who had also entered upon the homeless life. Later, Udāyi is recorded to have sat alone and apart with his former wife.[4] This was made into a pācittiya offence. The punishment inflicted for the former kind of offence could not be so straightforward. As abstention from sexual intercourse had been already incorporated in the five *sīlas*, and as these were insisted upon over and over again in the discourses, the particular occurrences which were thought to have led to this particular situation, and not the situation itself, were taken as the grounds for forming a nissaggiya offence. To have repeated the ban on intercourse would have been redundant, but if almsmen could not obey the precepts, future opportunities for misconduct could be lessened by eliminating as many contributory causes as possible. Hence, in this connection it was declared that an almsman who caused an old garment to be washed, dyed or beaten by an almswoman who was not a relation was guilty of a nissaggiya offence, for these were the circumstances which had led on this occasion to the breaking of the third *sīla*.

A record of the incestuous behaviour of an almswoman and an almsman, mother and son,[1] who had both been keeping Vassa at Sāvatthi, appears in the Anguttara; it is the occasion of a long discourse by Gotama on the fascinating chains held by women to bind men. Had the incident been set down in the Vinaya, a rule prohibiting the immediately preceding circumstances would have been made but not one forbidding the thing itself.

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[1] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 209-211.

[2] V., iii., p. 16.

[3] V., iii., pp. 205, 206.

[4] V., iv., p. 68.

Although an increasing strictness came to be imposed upon casual meeting, and upon the regularisation of the conduct of serious business, no doubt can be thrown upon the persistence of intercommunication between the two Orders. The only doubts that remain are connected with its difficulty and its frequency. It is disappointing to find that the Vinaya texts are so vague in their time-references. Nothing much more definite can be gained from them than that "at that time" the almsmen or the almswomen did this, that or the other thing. Because the rules were formulated gradually, and because later accretions have been made to the Vinaya, in some passages an action is regarded as blameworthy, which in others escapes all opprobrium.

The occurrence of such inconsistencies had made it almost impossible to determine a deeply interesting question: namely, the constitution of the audiences at the discourses. It is not at all clear whether the almsmen and the almswomen were allowed to receive instruction together, or whether they were segregated. There is no definite ruling upon this point and no uniform policy appears to have been observed. Sometimes the sexes seem to have been mixed, sometimes separate.

There are frequent allusions in the Therīgāthā to almswomen who went to Gotama where he was preaching—undoubtedly to men, and probably to women as well. In face of this it must be admitted that instances occur now and again to suggest that the sexes were segregated at the discourses. Even so, one cannot but wonder whether a homily such as Nandaka's,[1] if taken in isolation, would give a false impression of the constitution of the audiences. It is said that at that time senior almsmen used to take turns in preaching to the almswomen. Possibly this was an innovation. Otherwise Mahāpajāpatī must have heard of it and would not have "brought five hundred almswomen with her to the Lord with the request that he would exhort and instruct them."[2] But she had raised false hopes in her disciples' hearts, for they did not hear a sermon delivered by the Lord himself. Instead, they were submitted to a kind of catechism by Nandaka. He is represented as asking them a series of stereotyped questions, as though he were bored by the whole proceedings. If almsmen had been present at this gathering and also on the occasion when Gotama "directed Mahāpajāpatī to let all the almswomen come to him for instruction,"[3] the probability is that they would have been mentioned. Even so, had homilies sometimes been addressed to almswomen alone and apart from the almsmen, in the absence of more definite evidence it is hardly safe to assume that they always were. There is moreover some evidence to the contrary. In the previous dialogue,[4] it is said that the zealous reverend Puṇṇa went into Sunāparanta, notorious for the fierce and violent race which inhabited it; but because of his command of himself by the end of the first rainy season "he had gathered round him five hundred disciples of each sex." But against this may be set Nandaka's "catechism" and the description of him as the almsman to whom was assigned by the Master "the foremost rank among those who taught the almswomen."[1] Further, Mahā-Kappina's verse in the Theragāthā is in the form of a discursive sermon addressed to the almsmen.[2] Against it also may be set the account of the low expectations held by the almswomen of the Sāvatthi vihāra of the forthcoming sermon when it was Panthaka's turn to preach to them.[3]

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[1] Ang., iii., p. 67.

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[1] Majjhima, iii., 270-277; Theragāthā Cmy. on clxxxix.

[2] Majjhima, iii., 270.

[3] Therīgāthā Cmy. on xix.

[4] Majjhima, iii., 268, 269.

The following quotation, by its use of the disjunctive, also lends colour to the view that the Fourfold Congregation was segregated for instruction: "Blemishes too are an almsman's dissatisfaction and anger if he is disappointed in the desire . . . to be the preacher in the pleasaunce to the almsmen, or to the almswomen, or to the laymen, or to the laywomen."[4]

On the other hand from a passage in the Jātakas,[5] it appears as if the teaching were given to all who wished to hear it, together. This passage can hardly bear the interpretation that the teaching was given separately, the presence of the almswomen excluding that of the men, and *vice versa*. It is said that when the Teacher was at Āḷavi, many female lay-disciples and almswomen used to flock there to hear the Dhamma preached; and that the preaching was in the daytime, no doubt in accordance with the rule which forbade giving the teaching to almswomen after sunset.[6] But as time wore on the women did not attend, and there were only almsmen and men lay-disciples present, and then the teaching took place in the evenings. In the beginning both sexes had listened eagerly. A decline in the women's enthusiasm is reflected here, foreshadowing the even more lukewarm appreciation which came to follow. But who is to say to what extent their keenness and interest was stimulated by the proximity of the almsmen?

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[1] Ang., i., p. 25.

[2] Theragāthā Cmy. on ccxxxv.

[3] Theragāthā, verse 68, and note 3; *cf.* above, pp. 128, 129.

[4] Majjhima, i., 28, 29; *cf.* above, p. 127.

[5] Jātaka Cmy. on 16.

[6] V., iv., p. 54; and see above, p. 129.

The queſtion of the possible isolation of the almswomen for inſtruction might give rise to the further queſtion of the views held concerning their equality with the almsmen. From such evidence as there is, it does not seem as if the subſtance of the discourses was altered to meet any supposedly lower mentality among the almswomen, but that it was the same as in those delivered to the almsmen. Throughout it is apparent that no line of demarcation was drawn between the mental capacity attributed to the almsmen and to the almswomen. From this it follows that, apart from their disabilities, in such circumſtances where respect and honour could be paid to them, almswomen were, in several respects, on an equality with the almsmen.

It is said that the Buddha found Enlightenment for the weal of both the almsmen and the almswomen: the "many-folk" probably included female lay-disciples:

> "O surely for the weal of many folk . . .
> The Brethren and the Siſters who have found
> And seen Salvation's syſtem and its way,
> The holy seer did win enlightenment."[1]

This is found again in rather an amplified form in one of Vangisa's effusions:

> "O surely for the weal of many folk
> The advent is of Them-who-thus-are-come.
> Of women and of men who keep their rule.
> Yea, surely for the higheſt good of those—
> The Brethren and the Siſters, they who see
> The order of what is, what may become—
> For them the Seer did win enlightenment."[2]

The basis of this pæan may quite likely be the ſtatement ascribed to Gotama himself: "This that I have fully come to know I have declared to the almsmen, to the almswomen, to laymen, to laywomen, even this divine life."[1] Again, in a conversation with Mahā-Kassapa, Gotama is represented as saying that "there are five lowering things which conduce to the obscuration and disappearance of the true doctrine. Which five? It is when brethren and sisters, laymen and laywomen live in irreverence and are unruly towards the Teacher . . . the Dhamma . . . the Order . . . the training . . . concentrative study (*samādhismiṃ*)."[2]

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[1] Saṃy. Nik., viii., 12.

[2] Theragāthā, verses, 1255-1257. Vangisa was foremoſt in the facility of speech.

This resembles two conversations which he had with Kombala, who asked him in what conditions the Dhamma would decline or persist after the Tathāgata was dead. On one occasion[3] his answer was the same as that given to Mahā-Kassapa, except that for "concentrative study" he substituted "one another (*aññamaññam*)." On the other occasion[4] it was the same, but he added "towards zeal and goodwill."

In the Anguttara Nikāya it is written that Gotama said[5] that four kinds of people, almsmen, almswomen, laymen and laywomen, if wicked and evil, are defilements of the community; but if good and virtuous they are ornaments to it.

If women shared with men the privilege of hearing the Dhamma preached to them in exactly similar terms, they also incurred the duty of endeavouring to live it and to put it without blemish into practice. Both must be prepared to hand on the torch, and spread the teaching wide in the land. The rights and obligations of the sexes in this highly important matter were undifferentiated, and the understanding of the Dhamma brought them as its reward the same powers and advantages. Thus it was that almswomen as well as almsmen might be steeped in greed, hatred and ignorance, and they might be lacking in insight; or they might have utterly destroyed those cankers and be in the possession of right insight.[1] They may let these cankers to which objects perceived by the eye give rise overspread the heart; but if they do not exist, if they are abandoned, they will not overspread the heart, even when trifling objects, not to speak of considerable objects, come within the range of the eye.[2] According to Ānanda both almsmen and almswomen might give up the attainment of arahanship and fall from the Paths.[3] This view appears again in a later part of the Anguttara. It is there stated that any one of the almsmen or almswomen who has not conquered the wastes of heart nor destroyed the bondages of mind, may by day or night expect a falling away from the good and not an advance towards it.[4] In such a case, if an almsman or an almswoman was filled with shame at an offence, he or she was to expect the same results.[5]

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[1] Saṃy. Nik., xii., 7, § 65; *cf.* Saṃy. Nik., XLII., viii., § 7, where using the simile of the fields Gotama says that he also gives the Dhamma "to my (*mayhaṃ*) wandering recluses and brahmins that hold other views than mine."

[2] Saṃy. Nik., xvi., § 13.

[3] Ang., iii., p. 247.

[4] Ang., iv., p. 84.

[5] Ang., ii., p. 225.

But there might be no cause to be filled with shame and then the state would be a happy one. This is brought out by the answer given by Gotama to the Wanderer Vaccha-Gotta, who questioned him as to the number of his followers who had " entered on and dwells here and now in that Deliverance of heart and mind which is without Cankers." Gotama gave exactly the same reply in respect of the number of almsmen, almswomen, laymen and laywomen.[6]

In a curious little passage, also in the Anguttara,[7] it is recorded that two devas appeared to Gotama, and announced that some almswomen had become completely freed and emancipated (*anupādisesā, suvimuttā*).

The notion that women were capable of attaining enlightenment is emphasised in another passage which

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[1] Ang., ii., p. 144.
[2] Saṃy. Nik., XXXV., iv., 3, § 190 (4).
[3] Ang., ii., p. 157.
[4] Ang., v., p. 17 ff.
[5] Ang., ii., p. 242.
[6] Majjhima, i., 490-492.
[7] Ang., iv., p. 75.

PLATE VI

SISTER SUDDAMMACHĀRI (Ceylon)

[*face p.* 283

occurs in the Saṃyutta Nikāya.[1] Except that here the words are attributed to Gotama, it may be compared to the passage in the Majjhima Nikāya,[2] which describes Nandaka's sermon to the almswomen. Both lay stress on the notion of growth and making to become (*bhāveti*, *bhāvanā*) which stuck in Buddhism in spite of the dread and depreciation of becoming (*bhava*) which also grew into it. In the Saṃyutta passage the Ariyan woman disciple is described as one who "increasing in five growths (*vaḍḍhi*) . . . increases in the Ariyan growth, wins the essential, wins excellence. Which five?

She grows in faith, grows in virtue, in learning, in generosity, in wisdom. Making such growth, brethren, she wins the essential and wins excellence.

> "Who in this world in faith and virtue grows,
> In wisdom, generosity and lore—
> A virtuous disciple, in this world
> She wins what is essential for herself. (*Sāraṇ attano.*)"

In the Majjhima it is said that "there are seven factors of Enlightenment, ladies, by the growth and increase of which within himself an almsman, by the destruction of the Cankers comes, here and now, to dwell in the deliverance of heart and mind that knows no Cankers, which, of and by himself, he has discerned, realised and developed." It is significant that the Ariyan woman no less than the almsman is regarded, not as a finished product, not as the plaything of circumstances beyond control, but as capable of growing and becoming and advancing. It is also significant that in both these passages the growth is tied down to this world (*idh'eva*, just here, Here and Now), for in the early (prior) parts of the Nikāya books Here and Hereafter is much stressed. Their disjunction arouses a sinister apprehension of an increasing mis representation to follow, a misrepresentation not confined to this point only, but extending to several.

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[1] Saṃy. Nik., XXXVII., iii., 3, § 34.
[2] Majjhima, iii., 275.

Again, three months before he died, Gotama intimated this approaching event to Ānanda;[1] but the disciple, being rather slow-witted, failed to grasp the trend of the conversation, and did not ask Gotama to prolong his life by the exercise of his magic powers. Soon after he had left Gotama, Māra appeared and said: "Now is the time for the Exalted One to pass away from existence, for the Exalted One has spoken these words, 'I shall not pass away from existence, thou Wicked One, until I have gained almsmen as my disciples who are wise and disciplined, well-trained, secure in the Doctrine, erudite, versed in the Law, experts in the higher and lower doctrines, correct in their conduct, practised in the lesser duties, to proclaim, teach, make known, elucidate, analyse and make clear what they have learned from their Master, to refute and demolish by their knowledge any defamation of the Doctrine, and to spread the wonder-working doctrine abroad.' . . . I shall not pass away from existence, thou Wicked One, until I have gained almswomen as my disciples [Repetition as above]. Until I have gained male votaries, etc. [Repetition as above]. Until I have gained female votaries, etc. [Repetition as above]."[2] Gotama's thoughts are here the same for all four groups of his disciples, as are also the standards which he expects them to observe, and the kind of life which he expects them to lead. No distinction between what men can be and do and what women can be and do is hinted at, but on the contrary it is abundantly clear that with regard to the religious life women were thought to be as competent as men.

The conversation which Sakka is said to have had with Gotama[3] show them as capable of thinking along the same lines as men. The god is portrayed as saying: "A daughter of the Sākiyans named Gopikā who trusted in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Order and who fulfilled the Precepts . . . having abandoned a woman's thought and having cultivated the thoughts of a man, was at the dissolution of the body, after her death, reborn to a pleasant life, into the Communion of the Three and Thirty gods, into sonship with us."

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[1] Mhp., iii., § 3-5, 34-47; Udāna, *Jaccandha*, § 1, tr. D. M. Strong, p. 88 ff.; Ang., iv., pp. 308 ff.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Dialogues, ii., 271, 272.

After a disquisition[1] on the valuable example that a deceased almsman can be to one who hears about his life, Gotama is portrayed as going on to say exactly the same things about those almswomen and then about the lay-followers of both sexes who influence those who come after them. These may be "stablished in knowledge"; they may become those who return no more; once-returners to "make an end of ill"; or "embarked on the stream of salvation . . . and destined to win full enlightenment." When an almswoman learns that her deceased predecessor had been virtuous in life and conduct and peaceful of heart and had also won Deliverance, "she concentrates her whole heart upon becoming like her so that her life is blessed." Had almswomen never done more than inspire this emulation of their irreproachable lives, were this eduction of welfare from simply faring on, all that could be put to their credit, that alone would be a sufficient justification for their admission to the Order.

It is further said that anyone, man or woman, who persists in performing deeds of deliberate choice reaps a destiny which in no way depends upon the sex of the willer.[2] Hence it is that wonders may occur at the Cetiyas (the tombs or mounds raised over the ashes of the dead) of all who have passed entirely away when "some woman or some man of believing heart, able, intelligent, wise, endowed with insight, may deliberately take perfumes, or a garland, or a cloth, and place it on the Cetiya, making the resolve "May such and such a wonder take place."[1] Endowed with this particular power women are placed in the same category with the arahans and the devas, to whom are ascribed similar wonder-working capacities.

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[1] Majjhima, i., 465-468.

[2] *Ibid.*, iii., 204-205.

Two curious instances are to be found in the Dialogues which place the almsmen and the almswomen on an equal plane. The first occurs in connection with certain marks of the Superman vested in one who is a Buddha.[2] He is said to be popular among almsmen and almswomen, lay-brethren and lay-sisters, and to be beloved by them; to obtain their loyalty; their conformity to his wishes; and their attention by his voice; a united following, undivided against itself, either of almsmen and almswomen, lay-brethren and lay-sisters, all of them pure in heart.

The other is the petition, put into the mouth of King Vessavana, that Gotama, doubtless as an example to others, will learn a certain "ward-rune whereby both almsmen and almswomen of the Order and laymen and laywomen may dwell at ease guarded, protected and unscathed."[3] This kind of ward-rune was thought to be definitely different from the low-class magic spells (*tiracchānavijjā*)[1] which the laymen complained that the almswomen were learning like the women of the world, instead of repelling as unworthy of recluses.[2] The comparison to women of the world suggests that such practices were to some extent prevalent, survivals of the Vedic epoch. Such learning was forbidden to the almswomen as the result of the representations made by the lay-people; but there was said to be no guilt attaching to the learning of a safety spell, a charm (*paritta*) to ward away dangers. This is in accordance with a permission granted in the Cullavagga,[3] known as the *Khandha paritta*, where it is said that Gotama allowed the almsmen "to make use of a safeguard for yourselves, for your security and protection" against snake-bite. One of the members had died from this cause.[4]

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[1] Milindapañha, iv., 8, 51.

[2] Dialogues, iii., 168-177.

[3] This is the *Āṭānāṭa* ward-rune, called by the Cmy. a town. It gives protection against non-human beings in a town or village. Dialogues, iii., 195, 203, 205, 206, where the word *rakkha* is used. *Cf.* Jātaka, 31. The Bodhisatta made answer: "Sire, we have no other spells but this, that not a man among the whole thirty of us destroys life, or takes what is not given, or misconducts himself, or lies: we drink no strong drink; we abound in loving-kindness; we show charity; we level the roads, dig tanks, and build a public hall; this is our spell, our safeguard and our strength." *Cf.* also Theragāthā Cmy. on cxcv., tree-talk, *rukkha-kathā*, which Rhys Davids, *Buddhist Birth Stories*, London, p. 118, note, says "will be a scribe's mistake for *rakkha-kathā*, 'guard-talk' 'ward-rune.'" *Cf.* a Jain formula uttered by Queen Paumavaī, when she was carried into a dark and dreadful wood: "Then the fivefold formula of worship is my refuge (Reverence to the arhats! Reverence to the liberated ones! Reverence to the Masters! Reverence to the Teachers! Reverence to all saintly monks in the world!)." She then enumerated all the dangers that the power of the formula can banish. Meyer, *Hindu Tales*, London, 1909, p. 123 ff.

These statements are sufficient to show that a certain amount of equality was granted to all members of the Fourfold Congregation while in this world: and in matters which could only apply to the members of the Order, to almswomen as well as to almsmen. Summing them up: it is said that the seer won enlightenment for both almsmen and almswomen, laymen and laywomen, and taught the Dhamma equally to all four branches of the Congregation; that the virtuous or bad behaviour of the members of these four branches would have an analogous effect on the persistence or disappearance of the Dhamma, and would affect the Community for good or ill; that women may have the same spiritual limitations or the same mystic powers as men; that almswomen may grow and become as much as almsmen may; that Gotama would not die until he had gained wise and disciplined almsmen and almswomen, laymen and laywomen as his disciples; that women may conform to the same type as men in their relation to the Superman; and that they may all be guarded and protected by a safety-rune.

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[1] *Vijjā* is the Pāli word for the Vedic, *vidyā*, knowledge. It shows how low the use and meaning of the word *vidyā* had become that it had come to mean magic-spell. The fourth Veda is full of such spells. *Cf.* above, Life in the Order, p. 238, note 2. Also see Keith, *Religion and Philosophy and Upanishads*, Harvard, 1925, pp. 445-446.

[2] V., iv., p. 305.

[3] CV., v., 6, 1.

[4] Other spells occur in Ratana Sutta, Sutta-Nipāta, *S.B.E.X.*, 2nd ed., p. 36; Theragāthā, verses 874-876; Ang., ii., p. 72, against snake-bite; Saṃy. Nik., xi., 1, § 4; Jātaka, 159.

Besides these sayings about some of the privileges, attributes and influences of Gotama's religious and lay disciples here and now, various passages are concerned with the states to which they may hope to attain in future becomings.

Once when Gotama was at Nādika staying in the Brick Hall, Ānanda used the same terms in questioning him about the rebirth and destiny of an almsman, an almswoman, a devout layman, and a devout laywoman, who had lived there.[1] Gotama answered him as fully and as completely for the women as for the men, some of whom had similar destinies. He is recorded to have said that the sister Nandā "has by the complete destruction of the five bonds that bind people to this world become an inheritor of the highest heavens, there to pass entirely away, thence never to return," and that the devout woman Sujātā "is assured of final salvation."

The same idea is twice met with in the Anguttara;[2] where it is said that whatever almsman or almswoman concentrates strenuously in five ways will reap one of two rewards: either perfect knowledge (*aññā*) in this life, or the state of a non-returner (*anāgamitā*) after this life is over.

Gotama's fairness of mind with regard to women is confirmed in words ascribed to him in one of the Jātakas:[3] "No disciples, male or female, who seek refuge in the Three Gems . . . are ever reborn into hell and the like states; but released from all rebirth into states of suffering, they pass into the realm of devas and there receive great glory."

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[1] Mhp., ii., §§ 6, 7.

[2] Ang., iii., pp. 81, 143.

[3] Jātaka Cmy. on i.

Having briefly surveyed this rather wide vein of equality, turning to more mundane matters, it is found that the customary order of the sexes again crosses the vision. Although equality is still in view, as the following quotation shows,[1] an exact balance cannot be maintained. "Donations to the Confraternity are seven. First among these rank the donation to both the almsmen and the almswomen with the Buddha at their head; second comes a donation to both almsmen and almswomen when the Buddha is no more; third is giving to the whole body of almsmen; fourth to the whole body of almswomen; fifth is to a fixed number of selected almsmen and almswomen; sixth to a selected number of almsmen; and the seventh Confraternity donation is giving to a fixed number of selected almswomen."

Indeed, in actual treatment and practice the almswomen were not so much honoured as the almsmen.[2] By the adoption of the life and wearing of the robes of an Order, try she never so hard, woman cannot become unsexed either in herself or in the thoughts of men. She is still woman. In addition, the views concerning the status of women which had been held for centuries preceding the time of Gotama did not enable all his disciples to sustain his unprejudiced attitude towards them. The householder, Citta,[3] for example, went far, but he could not go far enough in disburdening his mind of the conception of woman as mere woman, and as nothing more—or less.

He himself had obtained conversion without seeing the Teacher. He then thought that he ought to see him, and decided to go to him at Sāvatthi, thirty leagues away. Gathering together his retinue he asked almsmen and almswomen, laymen and laywomen to make use of this opportunity and accompany him. He met with a large response, and "with him went forth of almsmen and almswomen and lay-disciples both male and female five hundred each." So far, so good. But "as the procession approached the monastery, five hundred almsmen led the way. The householder said to the eminent female lay-disciples: 'Reverend Sisters, you follow in the rear.'" It would be interesting to hear what place the almswomen took in the procession, and if, as is probable, they preceded the laymen. The cloister might have rights of priority over the world, but within each division women had no rights of priority over men.

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[1] Majjhima, iii., 255, 256.

[2] In present-day Burma and Ceylon nuns tend to be rather looked down upon and command much less respect than the monks.

[3] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 73-74.

For example, it is certain that the almswomen were enjoined to treat the almsmen with a deference tempered with humility. Complaints from the almsmen had led to a pācittiya offence being incurred by an almswoman if she sat on a seat or even on the ground in front of an almsman without asking leave,[1] unless she were ill; or if she asked him a question concerning the Vinaya, the Suttantas, or the Abhidhamma without asking his leave.[2]

In two other matters an almswoman's position is shown to be different from an almsman's, not only in degree but also in kind. It is said that an almswoman cannot create a schism in the Order, but only an almsman.[3] The implication appears to be that an almswoman cannot become a sufficiently powerful, original or heterodox leader of religious thought to create altercations, discord, quarrels, divisions, disunion, separations, schisms among the Sangha. If the almswomen did not preach to the almsmen nor to the other almswomen but only to the laity, it is easy to see that they would not have the maximum scope for the expression of religious sentiments which would be either in keeping with the training set forth by the Lord, or against it, and that their sphere of influence would be limited. But if a dissenter should arise, and in private conversations make her position clear, being only a woman, her words and teaching should not have any weight attached to them. There are in fact no records of any women who managed to create a schism, or of any who attempted to do so: and since this disability figures in the Milindapañha and not in the canonical literature, it may be taken merely as a further proof that by the time this work was written down women were again relapsing into a degraded position, and greater differences between them and men were again darkening the horizon.

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[1] V., iv., p. 343; see above, p. 121.

[2] V., iv., p. 344. Note the mention of the Abhidhamma here. Other references to it at V., i., 64, 68; V., iv., 144; Majjhima, i., 214, 218, 472; ii., 239.

[3] Milindapañha, iv., 1, 28.

Again, despite all her strivings as a *religieuse*, an almswoman could not hope to attain to the highest state of all, to Buddhahood.[1] At the end of the round of becoming, it is said: "A woman will not become a Buddha, absolutely holy and perfectly enlightened . . . nor a universal monarch." The second follows from the first, for a man born with certain marks will become the one or the other according as he leaves the world for the homeless state, or remains in it. The Majjhima,[2] not content with asserting that a woman can be neither a Buddha nor a universal monarch, makes a thorough denial of the potency of women to rise to the pinnacle in any of the realms. "It is impossible for a woman to be an arahan all-enlightened; but it is possible for a man to be. It is impossible for a woman to be an Emperor of the World, but it is possible for a man to be. It is impossible for a woman to be a Sakka, or a Māra, or a Brahmā; but it is possible for a man to be any of these."

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[1] Ang., i., p. 112.

[2] Majjhima, iii., 65, 66.

It may not be out of place here to make a few remarks on the way in which almswomen were addressed in conversation by members of the Orders. There were two forms of address. The almswomen nearly always called one another *ayye*, a polite form of address, best translated by *madam* or *my lady*, but in speaking of their members they are occasionally recorded to have used the ordinary lay-word for sister, *bhaginī* (vocative, *bhagini*). Two such instances are chronicled in the Vinaya: one[1] is when some almswomen are said to have said to the others, "The Order 'praises' detachment (or living in seclusion) in almswomen (*bhaginiyo*)," and the other,[2] when Thullanandā in speaking to some almswomen is recorded to have used the same phrase. Comparable to this is the use of the word in the narrative part of the first Bhikkhunī Pārājika,[3] which probably embodies one of the first regulations to be made. There it is said that at that time four sisters (*bhaginiyo*) took orders under the almswomen (*bhikkhunīsu*). From the recurrence of Nandā in their names (Nandā, Nandavatī, Sundarīnandā, Thullanandā), either it may be meant that they were natural sisters and so the term is to be taken literally, or this use of *bhaginiyo* may be taken to indicate a change of status immediately impending, if not actually accomplished, from laywomen to almswomen. The question is, was the word *bhagini* used simply by chance; or was its use deliberate, intending to imply some link with the world; or was it meant to imply inferiority? In the second case, even with the above possible exception, it did not as a rule suggest any kind of blood-relationship when used by members of the Order, but was simply meant to exemplify the passionless affection of the "sister-mind," which was the only mind that the almsmen should have for the almswomen.

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[1] V., iv., p. 239.

[2] V., iv., p. 241.

[3] V., iv., p. 211.

Almsmen usually addressed the almswomen as *ayye*, and the laywomen as *bhagini*,[1] for they at all events still belonged to the world. The almsman Raṭṭhapāla caused his former wives to swoon by calling them *bhagini*.[2] They also sometimes addressed almswomen as *bhagini*,[3] as for example when they rebuked them for not having swept their park during their absence.[4] The lay-people always addressed the almswomen as *ayye*,[5] for indeed they held them in a certain amount of veneration.

Two groupings of the use of *bhagini* in religious circles might suggest that the speaker regarded the person to whom he was speaking as inferior to him. First, there was its use during the Exhortation ceremony: "Are you, sisters (*bhaginiyo*) all here (or, of one mind, *samagga*) ? This, sisters (*bhaginiyo*), is the Exhortation," and also for their dismissal at the end: "Go, sisters (*bhaginiyo*)."[6]

Secondly, it was sometimes used by almsmen in addressing their former wives who had become almswomen.[7] The yoke of the old feeling of superiority might still be too strong for them to bring themselves to use the form *ayye*. *Bhagini*, a word to which they were accustomed in their lay-life, and one free from all implication of deference due, would best express their altered relationship to those who had now become virtually their sisters.

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[1] V., iv., pp. 17, 21, 132; V., iii., p. 83. In both these last the vocative *bhaginīti* is used. *Cf.* Ang., v., pp. 47, 138. *Cf.* CV., 4, 7, where the followers of Mettiya and Bhummajaka address a slave-girl as *bhagini*. *Cf.* Saṃy. Nik., XXXV., iii., 3, § 133.

[2] Majjhima, ii., 64.

[3] V., iii., p. 162; V., iv., pp. 59, 61, 63, 65.; *cf.* Ang., iv., p. 428. *Cf.* Saṃy. Nik., xxviii., § 10, where Sāriputta addresses the *paribbājikā*, Sucimukhī, as *bhagini*.

[4] V., iv., pp. 306-308.

[5] *E.g.*, V., iv., pp. 248, 255, 261, *passim*.

[6] V., iv., pp. 50, 54.

[7] V., iii., p. 205; V., iv., p. 263.

These two groupings might support the view that there was a lingering influence from the world manifesting itself, on the one hand in the form of address used at the Exhortation Ceremony, one of the earliest rules to be laid down, and where the adjustment of the details not made at first, would possibly persist as anomalies throughout; and, on the other hand, in the cases of the married almsmen who perhaps found it almost impossible to free themselves of their worldly associations when speaking to their former wives. But because the word appears now and again throughout the Vinaya in neither of these connections, neither of these two groupings can give a valid justification for the theory. The use of the word *bhagini* by members of the Order must therefore be regarded as one of those inconsistences belonging to a living phenomenon.

CHAPTER IV (*continued*)

LIFE IN THE ORDER. PART IV

Ānanda and women.—Gotama and women.

OF all Gotama's disciples, Ānanda was the most popular among the almswomen. Several reasons account for the esteem in which they held him. His solicitude for their cause, when, as it is recorded, only five years after the beginning of the ministry, Mahāpajāpatī and her followers came to Gotama, to ask that the Order might be opened to women, was characteristic of the sympathy which he extended to them throughout his life. His tireless efforts on that occasion must have evoked their unforgetting gratitude. From that time on, they would have felt that in him they had a friend—one who had a definitely feministic bias. Thoughts for all kinds of women so constantly sprang to his mind, that they could not have failed to appreciate the faithful way in which he kept their interests and rights to the fore, while others might have forgotten and championed them and their cause all the time. He was a man of the world; a scion of a noble family and a cousin of Gotama. He had a good deal of *savoir-faire*, and was learned in the art of getting on well with all kinds and conditions of men and women. He was wise and gentle. He was not so much interested in learned and abstruse topics as were some of the other disciples, but was always more anxious to think of the ordinary ups and downs of life and to diffuse comfort and happiness

Even if he were foolish in spiritual matters and lagged far behind the other Chief Disciples in gaining arahanship, in worldly matters "He is a wise man, almsmen, is Ānanda. He knows when it is the right time for the almsmen and the almswomen of the Order, for the devout men and the devout women . . . to come and visit the Tathāgata. . . .[1] Certain it is that if Ānanda preaches to a number of brethren, to a number of almswomen, to devout men, to devout women, they are filled with joy at the discourse, but ill at ease if he is silent."[2] In praising Ānanda highly it would only have been fair to him to mention some of the benefits which he had conferred on women as well as on men, some of the ways in which he had been of use to them, and the good opinion in which they held his preaching. In addition, since the almswomen, by the time that Gotama's death was approaching, had undeniably won for themselves a recognised position in the Order, notice of the affection which Ānanda inspired in them could not well be passed over in enumerating his good qualities.

His special interest in women is thrown into relief by the answers given by him, Revata, Anuruddha, Mahā-Kassapa, Mahā-Moggallāna and Sāriputta, to the question put by Sāriputta, "What type of almsman would illumine Gosinga Wood?"[3] The others respectively expressed the opinions that such a man would be one given up to meditation, one having the Eye Celestial, one practising asceticism and recommending it to others, one talking well with another on the Doctrine, and one having self-mastery. Ānanda's reply was that such an almsman would be "one who treasures and hoards what he has been taught, who learns and knows by heart the ideas which . . . declare the higher life . . . and preaches them both to almsmen and to almswomen and to the faithful laity of both sexes."[4] He had a genuine desire to spread the teaching not only among men but also among women.

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[1] Mhp., v., § 37.

[2] Mhp., v., § 38.

[3] Majjhima, i., 212, 213.

[4] *Ibid.*, i., 213.

To a certain extent he fulfilled this desire, for he was able to cast his net far and wide among different kinds of women, and to be of service to many in various walks of life. For example, it is recorded that he reported Jana-Vasabha's story after he had heard it from the Exalted One: "To the almsmen and the almswomen, to believing laymen and laywomen."[1]

He interceded, even though it was without avail, for Mahāpajāpatī when she was offering the Lord two new lengths of cloth which she had made with her own hands.[2]

The two stories of Fat Tissā[3] point to the veneration in which she held him. They are remarkable as documents showing the way in which a woman resented any slight thrown on her favourite. She was displeased because Mahā-Kassapa preached in the presence of "Ānanda, the learned sage," as if, so she said, "the needle-pedlar were to deem that he could sell a needle to the needle-maker." Again she was displeased because she heard that Ānanda "had been chidden and called 'boy' by Mahā-Kassapa." The result appears to have been, and it is given at the end of each story, that she fell away from the holy life.

Ānanda's consideration for women emerges on this same occasion when he proposed to Mahā-Kassapa that they should go to "a certain almswomen's settlement," probably in order to comfort the inmates on the recent death of the Buddha. It may be doubted that he really believed in the statement attributed to him in this story, that "women are foolish." He was probably simply making an attempt to soothe the aggravated Kassapa, whose reply, moreover, suggests the possibility of a fondness between Ānanda and the almswomen.

Ānanda spared himself no trouble if he thought that he might help an almswoman by elucidating the teaching to her. On one occasion an almswoman who was ill,[1] or who was pretending to be ill,[2] sent for him in order that, having brought him to her, she might try to seduce him. She could have had little conception of the integrity of his character if she thought that she could have succeeded. He responded immediately to the message that an ill almswoman wished to see him. But as soon as he saw the real state of affairs he gave her a discourse calculated to establish her on the strait and narrow way.

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[1] Dialogues, ii., 218.

[2] Majjhima, iii., 253.

[3] Saṃy. Nik., xvi., §§ 10, 11.

The Theragāthā Commentary,[3] while mentioning the view that a certain verse was spoken by Ānanda in admonition of those who had lost their heads at the sight of Ambapālī, itself considers that he uttered it in order to make the laywoman Uttarā, who was suffering her own beauty to dispose her to sensuality, understand the frailty of the body.

Yet if he now and again had occasion to reprimand certain women, there were also other times when he spoke with them and exhorted them in amicable and peaceful discourse. His activities were not confined within the limits of the Order. He also appears to have had extensive dealings with the laywomen, as his visits to the house of Migasālā testify,[4] and with others.

The kind of topic they would discuss might sometimes have resembled the substance of the conversation he is reported to have held with the nun Jaṭilāgāhiyā,[5] an adherent of the sect of the matted hair ascetics. She asked him what was the result of the intense concentration that, through a series of causal connections, which she stated, led to that happiness which nothing could torment. He replied: "The fruition of highest wisdom," which was the teaching of the Lord.

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[1] Ang., ii., p. 144 ff.

[2] This is the interpretation given by Nyāṇatiloka, *Die Reden des Buddhas*, vol. ii., p. 239, note.

[3] Theragāthā Cmy. on cclx.

[4] Ang., iii., 347; Ang., v., 137. These probably refer to the same occasion, as precisely the same conversation is recorded at both places.

[5] Ang., iv., p. 427.

In addition, there is an account which says that to some "women highly adorned, saluting the Thera and asking him questions," he preached the Dhamma.[1] It was Ānanda, too, who was chosen by Gotama to go to Pasēnadi's palace in order to instruct his consorts, Mallikā and Vāsabhakhattiyā, in the Dhamma,[2] as being the most suited of all his disciples to undertake this task.

In other accounts also Ānanda is portrayed as expending constant anxious thoughts upon the lay-people. His punctilious habits and kindliness must have endeared him to many. He was that rare product, a man to be relied upon. In the story of Visākhā's life[3] he appears in the *rôle* of scrupulous caretaker and collector of the material belongings of the laity, putting away things forgotten by them after a sermon. For example, Visākhā had doffed her *parure*, and had given it to a slave to keep while she went and listened to the discourse. The slave forgot it and went away. In a general way almsmen were not allowed to pick up other people's possessions if they found them lying about.[4] But now an exception to the rule was made, so that it ran: a valuable article is not to be picked up by an almsman, unless it is dropped in this very park (*i.e.*, at Sāvatthi).[5] The rule was formulated both to counteract the greed of the almsmen, who might have hoped to acquire extra belongings by theft; and also to prevent them from rummaging about the grounds when they ought to have been giving their minds to the higher things. The codicil was appended as a recognition of the importance of looking after the interests and property of others. If a thing was theirs, it was theirs, and if possible should therefore he returned to them. For there was thought to be no harm in the laity's having possessions, for they lived by different standards from those adopted by the recluses.

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[1] Theragāthā, ccliv., 4.

[2] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 51-52; and *cf.* below, p. 372 ff.

[3] Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, p. 473; V., iv., pp. 161, 162.

[4] V., iv., p. 162.

[5] V., iv., p. 163.

Again, seeing a certain friend of Visākhā weeping, Ānanda went up to her, and questioned her so as to find out the nature of her trouble, and then made a helpful suggestion, which comforted the lady.

Doubtless it is that Ānanda made a reputation for himself, which time did little to dim. For example, at the Council of Rājagaha,[1] held during the first rainy season after the Buddha's death, an accusation was brought against him for having first let women-mourners defile the body of the Buddha with their tears: although from a reading of the Mahāparinirvāna Sutta it is not apparent that any women were present at his decease.[2] It is thus an indication of the opinions, current at the time of the writing down of the events of the First Council, concerning Ānanda and his championship of women; it is a sign that women were held to be defilers; and that legends even then were springing up regarding the Buddha's death.

For courtesy to woman, Ānanda would have had an excellent example in Gotama himself. The Master's unfailing willingness to help them and to listen to them and to talk with them could not have passed unnoticed by his faithful henchman. An illuminating illustration is to be found in the Dhammapada Commentary, where it is said that Gotama went thirty leagues in order to allow a weaver's daughter to hear the preaching, and because she came late, having been unavoidably detained at home in the discharge of her duties, he waited for her before beginning his discourse.[3]

[1] CV., xi., 1, 10.

[2] Mhp., vi., 23-26; *cf.* v., 46-51.

[3] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 174.

In another passage[1] it is expressly said that he expounded the Dhamma for the benefit of two women who had been in the habit of hating one another through several previous becomings. Such instruction was evidently not given in private, for it is recorded that the assembled company also profited by the lesson.

Indeed, he never lost an opportunity of making things better than he had found them. He had powers to heal and to mend and to make people become greater in virtue, had this intensely blue-eyed[2] "tamer and driver of the hearts of men."[3] On one occasion he was gone to Anāthapiṇḍika's house,[4] and hearing a great noise he asked what it was all about. The householder said that the daughter-in-law of the house, Sujātā, was the cause of it. She was proud and rude, he said, and gave no alms, and went about all day scolding and did not honour and esteem the Blessed One. That was why her mother-in-law and her father-in-law and her husband all lamented. Gotama called her to him; she greeted him and sat down on one side in the approved fashion. He then told her in a few words that there are seven kinds of wives,[5] and mentioned the type of person to which each kind conforms, asking her of which sort she was. Versed as he was in the ways of human nature, he made an appeal to the last shreds of her wifely conscience, knowing that in the nature of things this would be her most vulnerable point. Had this failed, had she indeed been irredeemably hardened and over-weeningly callous to the traditional views of the wife's duties, the cause would have been hard to win. But when she told him that she did not understand the drift of his short exposition, and asked for a longer one, he must have had a foretaste of the victory to come. He therefore gave her a lengthy analysis, warning her before he began that she must listen to him attentively. The result was that she was quite won over by this talk and expressed a wish that from this day forth she might belong to the slave class (*dāsīsaman*) of wife. As the Jātaka comments, "by one admonition the Master tamed a shrew." One can picture the joy of the noble Visākhā when she heard of this regeneration in her youngest sister.[1] Thus Gotama, by his eagerness to help, by his wisdom and his anxiety to promote the good life, brought harmony into a house where there had been nothing but discord. Thus, also, was made a new convert, who, according to the Jātaka, "gained the fruition of the first path." Because she belonged to a rich and influential family she should have had plenty of scope for furthering the spread of the Dhamma.

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[1] *Ibid.* on verse 291.

[2] Dialogues, ii., 18. "Like flax-blossom," Cmy. on iii., 145.

[3] Therīgāthā, verse 216.

[4] Ang., iv., p. 91; Jātaka, 269.

[5] *Cf.* above, p. 44.

Other passages show Gotama in debate with important ladies of the realm. He discoursed with the princess Sumanā[2] on the value of giving alms, and with the princess Candī[3] on the advisability of keeping the five sīlas, when they came to him on different occasions with their huge retinues of women-attendants.

Two stories, both from the Udāna, may be cited as examples of Gotama's readiness to mete out assistance and sympathy to women. Suppavāsā,[4] after she had been "stricken with acute, piercing, terrible pains," in labour lasting for seven days, bethought herself of the Buddha and his disciples. She sent her husband to him to announce her faith in him and to tell him of her plight. Gotama is said to have replied: "Let it be well with Suppavāsā, the daughter of Koliya, let her bring forth in health a healthy son." And at that very moment she brought forth in health a healthy son. Regarded as a miracle or as a coincidence, or as a legend, the point is that Gotama is represented as listening to a story of a rather bad case of a natural event; and although he may have been pleased that she had faith in him and in the Disciples, the desire for her welfare and for that of the child are expressed by him in words of sympathetic understanding.

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[1] Jātaka, 269, gives their relationship.

[2] Ang., iii., p. 32 ff.

[3] Ang., iii., p. 35 ff.

[4] Udāna, *Mucilinda*, § 8, trans. D. M. Strong; *cf.* Jātaka Cmy. on 100.

The other case that may be cited in this connection is that of the wife of Sangamaji.[1] Sangamaji had become an ascetic. His former wife one day took her little son to him when he was having his midday rest at Sāvatthi, and said to him: "This, Samāṇa, is thy little child, cherish thou him." But he paid not the least attention, and at length realising that he did not care for his son, she led him away. "And the Blessed One, with divine vision, clear and surpassing that of men, beheld the discomfiture of the former wife of Sangamaji. And the Blessed One in this connection, on that occasion breathed forth this solemn utterance (*imaṃ udānaṃ udānesi*):

> "He neither rejoices at his arrival, nor grieves at his departure:
> This Sangamaji, freed from attachment, him I call a Brahmaṇa."

It is not said that the mother heard this utterance and was comforted by it; but it seems hardly possible that Gotama, having perceived her grief, would not somehow have made her acquainted with his words of consolation at this crisis in her life. The words as they stand may very likely be monk-words and not Gotama's words at all, for surely his would have been more full of human feeling for her distress.

No hint of this maudlin view of the undesirability of affection's thrall is conveyed in the words of praise that Gotama is said to have spoken to the lay-follower

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[1] Udāna, *Enlightenment*, § 8, trans. D. M. Strong.

Nakulamātā,[1] who by her determination and by her faith had rescued her husband, Nakulapita, also a lay-believer, from the jaws of death. Gotama complimented the householder on having been so fortunate as to have found such an able exponent of the doctrine and discipline and one who was so firmly grounded in it; he did not tell the wife that she was foolish to care so much whether her husband lived or died. This passage has escaped any over-weight of emphasis on love towards the Dhamma rather than love towards mortal man. Yet the almsmen-editors appear to have thought, world-weary as they were, that if a man were freed from affection he would be freed from ill (*dukkha*). Anyone capable of checking affection would be capable of stopping (*nirodha*) cause—the cause, that is, of what in their gloom appeared to them to be the most outstanding feature of life. Because the monks feared and deprecated life, they gave this interpretation to causation, thus making a travesty of it as it was intended by Gotama. They stood for cessation, were drags on the wheels of life: but Gotama stood for advance, *becoming* better, progressing on the Way, something of the man himself going on from life-span (*āyu*) to life-span.

Finally, in the story of Kisā-Gotamī, perhaps one of the most touching of the many stories in Pāli literature of the stilling of heart-felt grief,[2] he again appears as the consummate healer of sorrow. He here also displays his infallible powers of discerning the spirituality sometimes lying latent in people, concealed from their own knowledge, but cogent to lead them to arahanship, were they but shown the way.

The story has often been told—in *The Light of Asia* and in other books on Buddhism. There is more material here than for the lives of many of the other early adherents, the Therīgāthā[1] and the Therīgāthā Commentary and the Dhammapada Commentary[2] being the chief sources.

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[1] Ang., iii., p. 295 ff.; *cf.* another conversation he had with them, Ang., ii., p. 61.

[2] J. H. Thiessen, *Die Legende von Kisā-Gotamī*, Breslau, 1880, p. 34 ff.

Kisā-Gotamī was married to the son of a merchant in Sāvatthi, and after ten months she had a son who died almost before he could walk. She could not believe that this catastrophe was real, for she had not seen death before, and the little spot, red from the bite of a snake, did not look as if it could be the cause of such tremendous results. She took her dead child and wandered about from house to house, in such a wild state that people believed she had gone out of her senses. At last one old man advised her to go and seek out Gotama who happened to be at Sāvatthi at the time. She came to him, intending to ask him for a medicine for her dead child, when he was teaching the doctrine in a vihāra. He listened to her story and to her lamentations, and "seeing the promise in her, said: 'Go, enter the town, and at any house where yet no man hath died, thence bring a little mustard-seed.'"[3] She thought this would be easy, but soon found that she was unable to fulfil the injunction; for "the living are few and the dead are many," as one householder told her, and every house she visited had suffered loss in the death of child, parent or slave. When she perceived, as Gotama had intended she should, that she was just one among many, a sharer in the common lot, according to the Therīgāthā Commentary she acquired Insight into the Truth of Becoming, and laying her child in the charnel-field, expressed her new-found knowledge thus:

"No village law (*dhamma*) is this, no city law,
No law for this clan, or for that alone;
For the whole world—ay, and the gods in heav'n—
This is the Law: ALL IS IMPERMANENT."

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[1] Therīgāthā, lxiii.

[2] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 114, 287, 395.

[3] Therīgāthā Cmy. on lxiii.

No conviction of the universality of this truth could have been more clearly enunciated. Thiessen, following a Burmese edition of the Pāli text, does not ascribe Kisā-Gotamī's insight into this law to her unaided deduction, but to the teaching she received from Gotama on the everlasting condition inherent in the living. The truth of this grasped, grief is, or ought to be, assuaged. As far as the records show, this was a favourite form of Gotama's consolation; it was an application of his metaphysics to life. The Therīgāthā Commentary says that when the Master had spoken to her on the inevitability of death overtaking those "whose heart on children and on goods is centered,"[1] she became a stream-entrant and asked for ordination. Thiessen says that he "sent her to the almswomen"; perhaps after she had made this request. At all events she was ordained, and soon after Gotama uttered this "glory-verse":

"The man who living for an hundred years
Beholdeth never the Ambrosial Path
Had better live no longer than one day,
So he behold within that day the Path."[2]

She thereupon attained arahanship, and gave expression to her experiences in verses.[3] Having eulogised "friendship with noble souls," she compared her present state to her former state. She dwelt on the common lot of woman-kind, and recapitulated some of the particular events which had entered into her own life. Kisā-Gotamī's outpourings, embittered as she was by her own sufferings and those of other women, her fellow-victims, throw a flood of light upon the hardships endured by them in their *rôle*, played to the exclusion of almost every other, of wife and mother.

"Woeful is woman's lot! hath he declared,
Tamer and Driver of the hearts of men:
Woeful when sharing home with hostile wives,
Woeful when giving birth in bitter pain,

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[1] *Cf.* Dhp., 47, 287. [2] *Cf.* Dhp., 114. [3] Therīgāthā, lxiii.

Some seeking death, or e'er they suffer twice,
Piercing the throat; the delicate poison take.
Woe too when mother-murdering embryo
Comes not to birth, and both alike find death."[1] (Verse 217.)

Suicide and death and suffering here appear as woman's fate, and hence no release is found "through weary round of many thousand lives" (verse 220). But she had "come where death is not," having seen through the illusions of permanence to the Impermanent.

"Nibbāna have I realised and gazed
Into the mirror of the holy Norm. (Verse 222.)
I, even I, am healèd of my hurt,
Low is my burden laid, my task is done,
My heart is wholly set at liberty." (Verse 223.)

Her verse is imbued with deep reverence for the Buddha's words. Indeed, she must have felt supremely grateful to him for the words of sympathy he must surely have offered, but which have not survived, and for the Way of Escape which he showed. She became one of the foremost of the women-disciples, famous for her ascetic temperament, manifested in the wearing of rough robes.[2] But after she entered the Order she is only mentioned once,[3] the occasion being a visit from Māra. When she had entered the Dark Wood at Sāvatthi for the day-sojourn after her alms-round, he came, an imp of temptation, bent on frightening and distracting her. She recognised him, and by the sense of security permeating her answer, banished him from her side.

On the other hand, one or two accounts of her before she entered the Order have survived. The best-known incident is recorded to have occurred on the day before Gotama went out into homelessness; and it is made to appear that Kisā-Gotamī's words brought his determination to a head, and gave a final spur to his resolve. The story is in the Jātaka Commentary

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[1] *Ibid.* [2] Ang., i., p. 25. [3] Saṃy. Nik., v., § 3.

(Nidānakathā). Mr. E. J. Thomas points out that it is "not canonical, but a composition of the fifth century A.D., and that the story cannot properly be called southern, as it occurs also in the Tibetan."[1] It is very probable the two women are not the same.

So long as the monk-editors were ready to ascribe to Gotama a genial and full character, with warm sympathy open to the troubles of every man, they could not deny that he was ever accessible to the laity. This may be partly the reason why the stories mentioned above have survived. But how far he was accessible to the almswomen appears to be a matter of some doubt —a doubt which is increased and not diminished by the fact that the texts were written down, glossed and edited by men who had little historical sense and little sympathy with the doings of women.

Throughout the Vinaya, the almsmen are represented as bringing all their questions and difficulties straight to Gotama. The curious thing is that though the almswomen are said to complain, as the almsmen did, of every kind of matter, they are never represented as complaining direct to Gotama but always through the medium of the almsmen. Is this what really happened, or is it only made to appear to have been so by the chroniclers of later times? The formula for the transmission of complaints was stereotyped into so hard and fast a form as to admit of barely any exceptions. There are in fact only two. Instead of the laity or the good almswomen complaining to the almsmen, and the almsmen telling the Lord, on these two occasions[2] Mahāpajāpatī is reported to have complained direct to Gotama. Both complaints resulted in the formation of a rule.

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[1] E. J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History*, London, 1927, p. 240. The same story is also given in the Atthasālinī, trans. Maung Tin, *The Expositor*, vol. i., P.T.S., 1920, p. 42, where Kisāgotamī is further described as being daughter to Gotama's aunt.

[2] V., iii., pp. 234, 235; and see above, p. 274; V., iv., 262, and see above, p. 230.

It is possible that Mahāpajāpatī was in a privileged position, on account of her kinship with Gotama and her long-standing in the Order. Considering the consistently superior position enjoyed by the almsmen, it is possible that Gotama tacitly supported them in the view that through them all the complaints of the almswomen should be conveyed to him. On the other hand it is possible that her position was not exceptional, and that in reality the almswomen who were the contemporaries of Gotama had free access to him, and did not need to contract all their disciplinary business through the almsmen. Gotama himself would not have disdained to talk to women who were at a low level of culture, nor would he have confined himself to talking chiefly, as the records disclose, to the intelligent women of his own family: great ladies of whom the editors could not fail to make mention.

Besides these two occasions on which Mahāpajāpatī is said to have complained to Gotama, there are various other records of meetings between them. Zealous as always, she is described as going to him in Vesālī[1] and asking him to explain the Dhamma to her in a few words so that she might dwell in the teaching. He is reported to have told her to avoid such things as greed, the fetters, grasping, immodesty, unhappiness, sociability, sloth, and delight in doing harm or injury; and to pursue their opposites. Then would she be following the doctrine, discipline and instructions of the Master.

Again, in the Majjhima,[2] it is said that Mahāpajāpatī came to the Lord with two new pieces of cloth, which she begged him to be so good as to accept from her as being the work of her own hands at the loom. This story is referred to in the Milindapañha.[3]

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[1] Ang., iv., p. 280.

[2] Majjhima, iii., 253.

[3] Milindapañha, iv., 6. 10, 11.

In the Apadāna another meeting is recorded to have taken place between him and Mahāpajāpatī.[1] She is recorded to have gone and worshipped in thanksgiving for his having given her the happiness of the good doctrine; for her having been born (spiritually) through him; for the doctrine having grown in her through him; for her, having suckled him, drinking the Dhamma-milk of him; for her having plunged in and crossed over the Ocean of Becoming through him—her, Buddha-mother, a name most hard to gain. And then she uttered her plea: "I desire to die finally (*parinibbuti*), having put away this corpse. O sorrow-ender, permit me."

It is also in the Apadāna that Yasodharā is described as going to Gotama when she was in her seventy-eighth year.[2] He is made to say that he is in the eighties; hence it was very likely their last meeting. She did not ask him, as did Mahāpajāpatī, for permission to die finally. Hers was a haughtier and more self-reliant note. There was little in life, she declared, and having put it away she would go to him. But not seeking him as her refuge for "*me saraṇam attano*" (I am my own refuge). Death is coming in the way, and she appeared to know that that very night she would attain release (*nibbuti*) and that there was not (in store for her) birth, old age, disease, death, but that she would go to the undecaying, undying city (*pura*),[3] unconditioned. All the Cankers were perished; there was no more becoming, no more rebirth. He had shown her the power and had eradicated desire in her.

This whole poem lacks the genuine ring which makes Mahāpajāpatī's such a treasure. Yasodharā's pompous extolment of herself at the beginning, and her unnatural omission to say anything about his going away read as though the flavour of glosses and monk-editors' improvements had drenched the original verses in mists of obscurity.

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[1] Apadāna, vol. ii., Therīapadāna, No. 17, p. 542.

[2] *Ibid.*, No. 28, p. 584.

[3] An unusual expression.

On another occasion, which must have been earlier, Yasodharā is said to have gone at the head of eighteen thousand women recluses to Gotama.[1] She here says that she was his wife, the head of all. Among the names given to Gotama's wife, she alone personally (in this passage) claims one of them.[2]

In one of the Jātaka Commentaries[3] the chief wife of Gotama is called Sister Bimbādevī. She is said to have received initiation with five hundred (ladies) of the Sakyan clan, when Gotama first preached at Vesālī. Later, her son having also joined the Order, she decided to enter on the religious life herself. She therefore went to a nunnery and entered the Order, and went and dwelt in a cell in Sāvatthi, in company with her teachers and preceptors, beholding the Master and her beloved son. This son, Rāhula, is spoken of as a novice at the time when she joined the Order.

Even if the personal charm of Gotama did not influence women to the extent of leading them to renounce the world, and there is no evidence to show that it did,[4] it would have had considerable influence among the lay-devotees. As the above stories indicate, Gotama had the welfare of his female lay-followers as constantly in mind as that of the almswomen. It is beyond all doubt that he was often in direct personal communication with some of them, helping them with kindness and patience out of the depths of his experience and wisdom. He was benevolent towards them and wished them well. No question was too subtle, none was too trivial for him to give it the best of his attention. The personality of the Master, the honour in which he held women, and the deference and consideration which he consistently showed to them, could not have failed to impress contemporary society. This aspect of his life is but an exemplification of the way in which the personality of the founder of a religious or monastic movement is a cardinal factor in the initial spread of that movement. Gotama's methods with women and the example he set to men must have been powerful forces in raising the status of women: a boon which they repaid by their large allegiance and manifold devotion to the religion of which he was the embodiment and chief exponent.

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[1] Apadāna, vol. ii., Therīapadāna, No. 30, p. 592.

[2] For a discussion of the names of Gotama's wife, see E. J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History*, London, 1927, pp. 49, 50. He does not consider the Apadāna source.

[3] Jātaka Cmy. on 281.

[4] See above, p. 96.

CHAPTER V

THE ORDER AND THE LAITY. PART I

Donations from the laity to the Order.—Almswomen and laymen.

THE Buddhist Order of almspeople became elaborated out of very simple beginnings; it seems more to have slipped into being in the passage of a few years, unasked, unsought by the Founder, than to have been the organised accomplishment of any definite plan on his part. At the beginning of his ministry Gotama had no ambitions for the foundation of a religious Order. He simply set himself the task, after his initial hesitation as to whether it would be worth while or not, to make known the Truth, not as it appeared to him at the time of his Enlightenment, but as something different from that: it was worked out by him, with that perhaps as a basis, but he gave it a richer, more understandable and more meaningful content, capable of making a greater appeal to the many-folk.

He in fact changed the substance of the Chain of Causation, probably after deep consideration, into what came to be the First Sermon, the talk on the Middle Way. That it was acceptable to the populace stands in need of no proof. It is sufficiently demonstrated by the huge number of people who flocked to hear the new doctrine, many being so enraptured by what they heard, that they became religious followers, while many became lay-disciples. They heard the same teaching and found that the ideal was the same for all: by means of the Choosing Will to advance in the wayfaring. Differences only occurred because the ways trodden by the devotees had necessarily to vary with the varying powers at their command. The understanding of these points precluded any fundamental antipathy from marring the relations between the laity and the almspeople.

The institution of Vassa, during which the almspeople remained stationary, and did not tour from place to place, acted as a great combining force in the Buddhist organisation, for it brought together those who had renounced the world, and it brought these together with men and women who still remained in the household life as lay-votaries of the religion, to the mutual advantage of both sections of the community. This regular contact of the Order and laity contributed very largely to promoting the tenacity and vigour of the monastic system and the general cohesion of the lay-devotees. It thus helped to increase the facilities for propagating the Dhamma, and for converting the unconverted. For Gotama and his religious disciples were in frequent communication with the laity of both sexes, instructing them, comforting them, conferring merit on them, and assisting them with advice in difficult problems. These were some of the integrating influences emanating from a custom which the laity declared that the almspeople should observe.[1]

While it is impossible to ascertain how much or how little direct communication the almswomen had with the Founder, apart from hearing him preach, it is certain that the Chief Disciples, and perhaps Ānanda in particular, moved freely among them. The lesser disciples also, the rank and file of the Order, had various, though increasingly limited, opportunities for association. From these sources and from the preaching and teaching they heard, the almswomen would realise, if they were not already aware of it, the importance of spreading the Dhamma among the unconverted and of sustaining the converted in the faith.

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[1] MV., iii., 1, 1-3; V., iv., p. 296.

Further, even those who had no special aptitude for preaching were permitted to mingle with the laity and to accept gifts from them. The vow of silence was definitely forbidden,[1] for it "will not do for converting the unconverted and augmenting the number of converted, but it will result in the unconverted being repulsed (from the faith) and many of the converted being eﬆranged." Silence was a short-sighted discipline, which would only lead to the evasion of the real issues. Had it been enforced, the almswomen could not have gone, as they are said to have liked to do, to visit the laywomen and have a friendly talk with them as the evening was falling.[2] With characteriﬆic common-sense, weight was on the side of speech. A charming example of the easy relations which exiﬆed between the religious and lay-followers is provided by the active sympathy aroused in the Elder Pilindavac*kkh*a at the sight of a little girl whom he saw weeping the bitter tears of childhood's griefs.[3]

The laity took a great intereﬆ in the Order, and to a large extent made themselves responsible for its material upkeep, for it gave them an opportunity of keeping the ascetic ideal, almoﬆ universally admired in India, well to the fore. Until quite modern times sanctity has far and wide been veﬆed in an ascetic, in one who is able to resiﬆ his primary inﬆincts and who will not compromise with worldly intereﬆs. Hence a reflected sanctity appertains to anyone who miniﬆers to him. One of the reasons why asceticism was positively encouraged in India was on account of the chances it provided for non-ascetics to acquire merit,[4] as they supposed was possible, by giving food, medicine, raiment if used, and dwellings, if used, to those whom they regarded as holier than they; and greater holiness was thought to reside in a more rigid asceticism than any to which they could dedicate their own lives. In the Anguttara Nikāya it is said that the noble youth who provided the Company of Almsmen with clothes, food, bedding, medicine for the sick, was thereby on the right and proper path for the laity to follow; he acquired merit and would go to heaven.[1] The notion that gifts in kind have merit-working powers reverberates throughout the entire literature;[2] and the "charitable gift of alms"[3] from either a plenteous or a scanty store was not to be despised,[4] for

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[1] MV., iv., 1.

[2] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 21-23.

[3] MV., vi., 15, 5-6.

[4] A short liﬆ of benefactors whose merit grows by their usefulness to the world at large is given at Saṃy. Nik., i., 5, § 7.

> "His generous gifts upon the giver's self
> As rich and copious showers of merit fall."[5]

Again

> "By him who would have merit's sure reward
> By him who can discern, gifts should be given."[6]

This notion, the outcome of the application of a mature metaphysic, continued to flourish under Buddhism. In illustration may be cited the delight of the people of Rājagaha and the neighbouring country on the occasion when Gotama decreed that the almsmen might accept lay-robes, if they preferred them to robes made of rags taken from the dust-heap (*paṃsukūla* robes);[7] because they thought, "Now we will bestow gifts (on the almsmen) and acquire merit by good works." Many thousands of robes were presented in one day at Rājagaha and in the surrounding country. But if the laity supported this economically unproductive body of people they naturally expected to receive something of value in return. Therefore those who proclaimed by their way of living that they intended to be ascetics must be watched and guarded and not allowed to fall from that way.

To ensure this end, the laity did not merely make generous donations to the Order. Their criticism, also, was constantly directed towards its better management;[1] towards the more seemly,[2] thoughtful and grateful and less greedy[3] conduct of the almsmen and almswomen; and they complained if they thought that the almspeople were tending to become too much like people still living in the world (*gihikāmabhoginiyo*).[4] Even if they had not made these representations the almspeople would not necessarily have fallen back into that way of living which it was legitimate for the laity to pursue. For they were conscious that all the precepts for life in the Order had their *fons et origo* in the conviction that life in and of the world was not an adequate vehicle for traversing the seas of existence to the shores of nirvāna. Hence the good almspeople, at least, were as determined as the laity to keep the discrepancy between life in the Order and life in the world as wide as possible. In addition, since they fully realised that their way was not the way for every man, they did not rebuke others for not joining them, and did not despise them for remaining in the worldly sphere.

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[1] Ang., ii., p. 65-69.

[2] Ang., iii., p. 32 ff.; 35, 41.

[3] Saṃy. Nik., i., 4, § 3.

[4] *Ibid.*, i., 5, § 9.

[5] *Ibid.*, iii., 3, § 4.

[6] Saṃy. Nik., i., 4, § 2.

[7] MV., viii., 1, 35.

On the contrary, they knew themselves to be the means whereby the laity could increase their own welfare, for they fulfilled two important functions for them: they preached the Dhamma to them and conferred upon them the great happiness of receiving gifts of alms from them. It is said that there were two kinds of gifts:[5] material gifts and the gift of the Dhamma; of these the higher kind was the gift of the Dhamma. The laity, unable to give this, had to fall back for gaining merit on material gifts—gifts of almsfood, clothes, dwellings and medicine. Laywomen were as prominent as laymen in taking heed for their own welfare here and hereafter by keeping the religion going in these ways.

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[1] *Cf.* above, pp. 129 ff., 137, 224, 228; and V., iii., p. 54; V., iv., pp. 296-297, 317, 318, 336.

[2] As *e.g.* the institution of Vassa itself. MV., i., 52, 2, *passim*; CV., x., 10, 1; x., 1, 2; V., iv., pp. 243-254, 265, 266, 283, 312.

[3] V., iv., pp. 254-256, 258, 310, 346-347.

[4] V., iv., pp. 288, 289, 297-299, 305, 337-340, 341-342.

[5] Ang., i., p. 193.

Gifts of food were not merely confined to the alms put into the alms-bowls during the alms-round or during alms-pilgrimages.[1] It was also a custom among the laity to give food regularly, as "bequests perpetual."[2] There are records of almswomen who enjoyed a continuous supply of food (*niccabhattikā*)[3] at the house of the family who supported them. The account of the almswoman, who went out of the house during the meal without asking leave, may be adduced as evidence that she did not merely receive food in her alms-bowl, but that she ate her meals as a regular diner in the house of a certain family. Mention is made of the seat which she was given to sit upon as she was eating her meals. The family complained of her disrespectful conduct. Hence it was made a pācittiya offence for an almswoman, once she had entered the house for the daily meal, to get up and go out without giving notice or asking for leave. Courteous behaviour was required.

Another attempt to enforce good manners followed on Thullanandā's bad behaviour after she had taken her meal (*pacchābhattaṃ*).[4] She lolled and sprawled on her seat, so that the lay-people were shocked and they grumbled: but they did not say that she was behaving like the women of the world. These were perhaps under no social obligation to conduct themselves in a more gracious fashion. As usual, the complaints resulted in the formulation of a pācittiya rule; it forbade almswomen to loll or sprawl on a seat in the house of a layman after the meal without asking leave. It was not made an offence for an almswoman to behave in this way if she had a permanently appointed seat, if she were ill, overcome by misfortune, out of her mind or a beginner:[1] exceptions which appeal to us even to-day by the force of their reasonableness and kindliness.

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[1] Majjhima, ii., 164, 184, 209, *passim*.

[2] Saṃy. Nik., iii., 1, § 9. *Cf*. Dialogues, i., 144.

[3] V., iv., p. 271; *cf*. V., iii., p. 237.

[4] V., iv., p. 273, lit. the whole afternoon, until sunset; and *cf*. below, p. 340.

The notion of the importance of civil behaviour was perpetuated in two rulings whose main intention it was to prevent the almswomen from putting obstacles in the way of the laity, if these wished to make gifts. The first ruling arose[2] when the family who supported Thullanandā told her that they wished to present robe-material to the Chapter of Almswomen. But because she was very busy, she put an obstacle in their way. This might perhaps have passed without comment, had not their house been burnt down. They became angry, and complained. They were faced by ruin all round, for their goods were gone and their merit-gaining measures were gone; they resembled so much drift-wood in the material and spiritual oceans, cast as they were from their anchorages. It was undesirable that the laity should feel cut off from their fancied sources of gaining merit. Hence it was made a pācittiya offence for an almswoman to put an obstacle in the way of anyone who desired to make a gift of robe-material to the Chapter of Almswomen.

The second ruling arose[3] on an occasion when a certain family asked one of the almswomen to dine at their house. When she had finished her meal they asked her to go out and invite others to come in. But as, she selfishly thought, they would be all too ready to do so, she warned them off by saying that there were fierce dogs, a wild bull and a cess-pool. In consequence of the family's complaints, it was made a pācittiya offence for an almswoman to bear a family a grudge.[1] For by her greed and selfishness she had grudged them an opportunity to perform a merit-working deed. If the sentiments contained in the Saṃyutta had had their counterpart in fact, she would have been faced by a harder punishment.[2] For there it is said that those "who bar the way for gifts to others given" count as misers, and come back to life "in purgatory, or as animals, in Yama's kingdom."

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[1] The last four are frequently given as exceptions.

[2] V., iv., p. 283.

[3] V., iv., p. 312.

The first of the stories quoted above throws a high light on the parlous condition to which the laity imagined that they were brought if they were debarred from their customary means of acquiring merit. Their distress, if they were confronted by impediments, is made to stand out in addition to the disapproval of the greed and selfish behaviour of the almswomen. This latter aspect of the prevention of the bestowal of alms recurs with force in one of the Jātakas.[3] A gluttonous almswoman is said to have gone for alms to a part of the city unvisited by the other almswomen, but where she received dainty food. She had not a generous thought for the laity or for the other almswomen; for wishing to keep this good fortune to herself, she informed others that where she went there was a fierce elephant, a fierce horse and a fierce dog, and besought them not to go there. In the usual moral spirit of the Jātakas, she received her deserts in this becoming in the shape of a broken leg, together with taunts and condemnation from her fellows.

In face of such records, it is obviously impossible to attempt to deny that there were bad almswomen. In the Anguttara[4] they are characterised as selfish in one or more of the five following ways: with regard to dwellings (*āvāsa*), families (*kula*), gifts (*lābha*), appearance (*vaṇṇa*), and the Dhamma.

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[1] Lit. to be a family-grudgster, *kulamaccharinī*.

[2] Saṃy. Nik., i., 5, § 9.

[3] Jātaka, 115.

[4] Ang., iii., p. 139. *Cf.* Dialogues, iii., 234.

In addition to these almswomen, each of whom was a regular diner at the house of the family who supported her, there are also records of laymen who on some special occasion invited a group of almswomen to dine at their house. For example, Sāḷho, the nephew of Migāra, Visākhā's father-in-law, had arranged to build a vihāra for the almswomen. While the work was in progress, he one day asked the whole Chapter to a meal at his house.[1] It is possible that he had an ulterior motive in doing so—to make an opportunity to see Sundarīnandā alone—but whatever the motive, the fact remains that the whole Chapter might now and again he asked to dine by a member of the laity.

There was also a certain amount of casual entertainment for those who wished to partake of it, and who had the opportunity to do so. Upāli, the ex-Jain, appears to have kept open house,[2] for on his conversion he declared that his doors were no longer open to the male and female Nigaṇṭhas, but only to the men and women who were the Lord's disciples or lay-followers. Since there was no caste-etiquette to be observed, there was nothing to prevent the almspeople from taking food if offered at the house of a non-Buddhist. Opportunities of this kind afforded the chance to gain a new convert. This happened in the case of the brahmin lady who asked Udāyin three times to a meal in her house,[3] each time hoping that he would tell her the doctrine, which her pupil had reported to her as lovely in the beginning, lovely in the middle and lovely at the ending. With great restraint he waited until the third occasion; she then took off her sandals, sat on a low seat and unveiled her head, thus complying with some regulations, hitherto unknown to her, for hearing the Dhamma. She was immediately converted.

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[1] V., iv., p. 211.

[2] Majjhima, i., 380.

[3] Saṃy. Nik., XXXV., iii., 3, § 133.

Sometimes a guild or corporation of the laity made a collection of money, or a store of a specified article, such as rice.[1] They deposited whatever they had collected in a certain shop, so that the almswomen could go there and fetch the equivalent for the money, or part or all of the stored article.

Besides giving the almswomen food into their almsbowls, entertaining them either perpetually or occasionally, singly, several together or the whole Chapter together, or giving them stores of food now and again, the laity sometimes also supplied them regularly with special articles of diet. It is true that only those supplies are chronicled which had to be stopped. But in connection with these, incidentally others are mentioned whose continuation was allowed. For example, the Chapter of Almswomen at Sāvatthi had been provided with garlic (*lasuna*) by certain lay-devotees, and they had been able to go into the fields to fetch it themselves. But this was cut off as an article of diet, because on one occasion Thullanandā was over-greedy, and took a great deal, even though the almswomen had been asked to be moderate, a feast at Sāvatthi having greatly diminished the supplies.[2] Greed was looked upon as an unsuitable thing unworthy of almspeople and not to be tolerated in them. Henceforth the eating of garlic at all was made a pācittiya offence.[3] On the other hand, it was not thought blameworthy to eat onions, potherbs, myrobalam, bow-garlic, fruit of the sāl-tree and so forth, because the manner of procuring and eating these articles had never given rise to comment. As was so often the case in the framing of the pācittiya rules, the thing was not stopped because in itself it was wrong, but because the accompanying conditions were, on some ground or another, wrong.

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[1] V., iv., pp. 252, 253.

[2] V., iv., p. 258-259. Jātaka Cmy. on 136. This Jātaka appears in the Vinaya *loc. cit.* as though told by Gotama; *cf.* CV., v., 5, 1, where, in consequence of the greed of the almsmen, the eating of mangoes was made a dukkata offence.

[3] *Cf.* CV., v., 34, where it is made a dukkata offence for the almsmen to eat garlic, in this case not because they had been greedy, but because one who had been eating garlic sat apart at a sermon on the Dhamma so as not to annoy the others. Apparently it was thought that he would not be able to hear the preaching.

Other attempts were made to curb the greed of the almswomen. The six almswomen's excesses in ordering and eating extra supplies of ghee, honey, molasses, fish, meat,[1] curds and milk, led to the ordering and eating of each of these kinds of food being made into a matter to be confessed;[2] this, they thought, was enough to be forgiven. These were the words to be used in the confession: "I have done a sin, an unsuitable thing (*asappāya*), a thing to be confessed, that I confess." With the usual kind-heartedness characteristic of the Vinaya, indulgences were allowed to almswomen who were ill, and no strictures were placed on their ordering and eating these otherwise forbidden articles.

Although under Buddhism the normal human instincts were not entirely condemned, they were yet largely curtailed. In common with other forms of monasticism it partially failed to realise that the suppression of the bodily appetites sublimates them into greed.[3] Ever seeking to gratify themselves, if the route is not open, then it will be circuitous and underhand. A complete denial of the usual and natural wants of the body is only possible to those who have attained to an exceptional spirituality of mind or to an exceptional atrophy of the senses, conditions not generated merely by entering an Order. Indeed, one of the tragedies of all monastic Orders is that they originated with people who, for some reason or another, had a genuine desire to leave the world, and who were ready at almost every point to throw in their lot with the antitheses of the world's ways. They then become recruited from people who are less austere in temperament, and who had not the particular spur and stimulus for joining which animated the pioneers. Hence the later members find that the demands made on them by renunciation are well-nigh intolerable: it then becomes necessary to increase external restrictions acting as guides, in the absence of spirituality, towards leading the good life.

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[1] They were allowed to eat flesh if they did not know, see or suspect that the animals had been killed on purpose for them. They were not allowed to take life themselves. MV. vi., 31, 14.

[2] V., iv., pp. 346-348.

[3] *Cf.* Fosbrooke, *British Monachism*, or *Manners and Customs of the Monks and Nuns of England*, vol. ii., p. 8: "Gluttony, their (the monks') grand crime is the natural pleasure of those who are debarred from other enjoyments, whether by physical or moral causes."

The subject of the distribution of alms must not be closed without making some reference to the part played by the laywomen. Although there are no references to donations made by them exclusively to almswomen, several examples of their ambiguous generosity in giving alms-food to the almsmen appear in Pāli literature. They gave food to individual almsmen as they were going on their alms-rounds; to several almsmen; to the whole Chapter; occasionally or regularly.

Following on the inadvertence of one of the almsmen, a rule of conduct was established for them to observe as they went on the alms-round. This rule shows that they were allowed to take their food in the house of a layman if it was offered to them. Since the feminine pronoun is used in setting forth some of the details that they should notice in order to ascertain whether the people seemed willing to give food or not, it appears that it was usually assumed to be offered by a woman.[1] She performed this function, her duty and her privilege, because the home was looked upon pre-eminently as her sphere, and not because she was in any way the owner of the house.

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[1] CV., viii., 5, 2

As the props and stays of the religion, doing much to keep it going, women shine out now and again from obscure little passages tucked away in the texts. For example, the brahmanee, the mother of Brahmadeva, was induced to transfer her perpetual oblations and gifts and choice meats, which, according to Buddhaghosa, she set off by decorating her house, from Brahmā to her son, "a sage by whom the flood is overpassed."[1] If "merit she wrought, her future happiness," by that selfsame donation of alms she would be keeping her son on the way which, as they believed, would guarantee for him his future happiness.

There was also the woman who became involved in a horrible dilemma. Either she had to refuse to feed the stream of almsmen who poured into her house, or she had to refuse to go away at once to her husband at his bidding.[2]

In the Dhammapada Commentary there are several references to women who gave food to the almsmen on some special occasion. For example, the mother of Tissa "both before her delivery and thereafter . . . gave festivals at which she provided the five hundred almsmen led by Sāriputta with rich porridge of honey, milk and rice";[3] and the mother of Paṇḍita fed the almsmen with choice portions of redfish.[4] It is said that Mallikā, the wife of the general Bandhula, "had invited the two Chief Disciples to her house together with five hundred almsmen."[5] With fewer financial means at her disposal, but not with less desire to acquire merit, a "certain woman, the keeper of a field of rice-paddy . . . taking some of the parched rice . . . went quickly to him (Kassapa the Great), poured the rice into the Elder's bowl . . . and set out to return, reflecting on the alms she had given to the

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[1] Saṃy. Nik., vi., 1, § 3.

[2] V., iv., p. 79. See above, p. 38.

[3] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 75.

[4] *Ibid.*, on verse 80.

[5] *Ibid.*, on verse 47.

Elder."[1] She was determined not to miss an opportunity of gaining merit for herself.

There was also scope to acquire merit on the days of special ceremonies. For example, an account is given of the preparation made by the Elder Tissa's sister[2] of rice-gruel, boiled rice and other provisions for the robe-makers, and of her donation of an extra allowance on the day that her brother's robe was finished. Cases of this kind might be multiplied.

In consequence of the women's generosity and faith, the almspeople rested assured that their material needs would be attended to. They were thus enabled to go about their daily business with minds free from anxieties, and to bring an undivided attention to bear on their meditations and ceremonies. Gosāla's mother[3] was a lady who daily dispensed alms. One day she gave her son, who was on his alms-rounds, rice-porridge prepared with honey and sugar. "Refreshed by the appropriate food offered him, he put forth insight without toil and with mind intent on the ebb and flow of all things, attained to the topmost meditation of the Paths, winning arahanship, with mastery of the form and meaning of the doctrine." He expressed his appreciation of the "proximate cause" in his verse.

Others, besides Gosāla, are recorded to have been conscious of their indebtedness to the laity; and to have expressed their sense of gratitude for the bodily sustenance given them, and especially for the spiritual nourishment which followed. Of one of them it is said that "once having received wholesome food, in but a few days the Elder attained arahanship."[4] He expressed his knowledge of the way in which matters had been made easy for him by the removal of material worries in saying: "The great female lay-disciple has indeed been a support to me. By her assistance I have attained release from Becoming." The approved way in which to use alms received was pronounced to be as follows: "Duly and advisedly (the almsman) exercises the use of alms received . . . only to support and sustain the body, to save it from hurt and to foster the higher life . . . ensuring progress and the blameless lot of well-being."[1] If gluttony were a Canker, underfeeding were a hindrance. Here, as in everything, only by following the Middle Way which puts an end to woe, would an almsman be able, like Cūḷaka, to say to himself:

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[1] *Ibid.*, on verse 118.

[2] *Ibid.*, on verse 240.

[3] Theragāthā Cmy. on xxiii.

[4] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 35; *cf.* Dhp. Cmy. on verse 404.

> "Healthy thy frame and fit and vigorous
> To make good progress in the Buddha's rule."[2]

The view that the giver as well as the recipient was a gainer finds neat expression in the story of a certain woman who paid unswerving attentions to the wants of the Elder Assagutta for more than thirty years.[3] One day at the end of the thirty years, she invited both Assagutta and Nāgasena to take their midday meal with her on the following day. After it was finished and Nāgesena had delivered the thanksgiving discourse, "there arose in her heart Insight into the Truth, clear and stainless, which perceives that whatsoever has beginning, that has the inherent quality of passing away." This was one type of the reward to be gained by these women for the part they so prominently played in the society of the day: by their munificence the almsmen were assisted "to escape from Becoming (*bhava*)," and the donors on their side found recompense in mental and spiritual spheres.

There were cases where the almsmen, although not themselves gaining any obvious profit, were instructed to comply with the lay-people's wishes, if these asked them to do something "for good luck's sake."[4] This ruling was formulated on the occasion when the laywoman, who had had a miscarriage, asked the almsmen to step over a cloth which she had had laid down for ceremonial purposes.

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[1] Majjhima, i., 10.
[2] Theragāthā, clxvi.
[3] Milindapañha, i., 30, 31.
[4] CV., v., 21, 4.

Later records reflect the ever more materialistic temper of the times, and are not so insistent on the purely spiritual blessings that accrue to donors. In one of the Jātakas, a poor old woman is recorded to have fed Sāriputta[1] from her minute store. In acknowledgment of this pious deed she received gifts of a thousand pieces of money from King Pasēnadi, from Anāthapiṇḍika the Elder and from Anāthapiṇḍika the Young, and from Visākhā; other families sent a hundred or two hundred or so as their means allowed. Thus in a single day she obtained as much as a hundred thousand pieces of money. The chief of the merit is not, however, accorded to her for having given her one portion, but to Sāriputta for having been her refuge, and for not having disdained to eat the food which she had prepared. He was meritorious and she became rich, not in spiritual growth, but in financial resources.

This whole story savours of brahmin influence. The unalloyed conception of giving among the Buddhists differed by the addition of an extra element from the brahmanical view which is stated in the Majjhima.[2] According to the former it was considered quite as meritorious to give to the obscure as to the eminent, to the uneducated as to the educated; but the latter, although agreeing that it was more meritorious to give to the virtuous and good than to the wicked and profligate, considered that other things being equal, greater benefits would accrue from gifts made to an educated man than from gifts made to an uneducated man. All that counted in the Buddhist view, according to which goodness embraced something more than knowledge, all that made a gift pure or impure depended on the virtue and goodness or on the wickedness and evil of the donor or recipient or both,[1] and not on his amount of learnedness.

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[1] Jātaka Cmy. on 254.

[2] Majjhima, ii., 154.

Sometimes a lay-devotee issued an invitation to the whole Sangha of almsmen to take a meal or a series of meals in his or her house. Laywomen were as forward as laymen in proffering their hospitality. Besides Ambapālī[2] there was also the great Subhaddā,[3] and Nandamātā,[4] who had offered alms to the Community of Almsmen at Sāvatthi, and who on another occasion invited the Community of Almsmen with Sāriputta and Moggallāna at their head to take a meal at her house.[5] Suppavāsā, the daughter of the King of Koliya, out of gratitude for the alleviation of the pangs of child-birth and for the birth of a healthy son, asked " the Blessed One and the Brethren to take their meals with her for seven days."[6] But probably not merely the landmarks in her life moved her to dispense alms. For there is another record which tells that Gotama visited her dwelling,[7] and spoke to her of the blessings of a long life, beauty, happiness and strength, which the donor of food bestows on the recipient: a counsel which she would have been likely to translate into action.

One of the favourite ways in which the laity hoped to gain merit was by the gift of robes or of robes-material. The almsmen were told something which was of vital interest to the almswomen as well. " There are, almsmen, these eight grounds for getting the gift of robes . . . when he gives it to both the Sanghas

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[1] Ang., ii., pp. 80, 81.

[2] See above, p. 90.

[3] Theragāthā Cmy. on xv. Two ladies of the name of Subhaddā occur in the Jātakas. One was the Queen of Sudassana, the universal monarch; Jātaka 95. The other was the child of the queen-consort in the Madda Kingdom; Jātaka 514.

[4] Ang., iii., p. 336.

[5] Ang., iv., pp. 63-67.

[6] Udāna, *Mucilinda*, § 8, trans. D. M. Strong, see above, p. 302.

[7] Ang., ii., pp. 62, 63.

. . . when he gives it to a specified number (that is, according to the editors, of almsmen and almswomen, the Bhikkhu-Sangha and the Bhikkhunī-Sangha). When he gives it to both the Sanghas strict fairness is to prevail, for an equal half is to be given, even though there be only one almswoman and many almsmen present, or only one almsman and many almswomen present, and when he gives it to a specified number it is the number present at the giving of congey, or rice, or hard food, or robes, or bedding, or medicine."[1]

Cloaks could be given by the laity to the Sangha, to several almswomen or to one. To the first class of these recipients belongs the layman who had been making a vihāra for the almswomen;[2] at the festival of the vihāra he was anxious to give robes, although it was out of the right time, to both the Sanghas. Again, some lay-people wanted to give robe-material to the Council of Almswomen, but Thullanandā prevented them.[3] In some cases the lay-people collected money which they deposited in a shop with the intention (which is twice recorded to have turned out to have been but a pious hope) that the Council of Almswomen should go and buy the robe-material there.[4]

Representing the second class of recipients it is recorded that certain lay-devotees saw some almswomen returning to Sāvatthi after the rain-retreat in worn and rough garments. They declared that they would take these away.[5] In place they gave them some cotton-cloth cloaks. But although it was the wrong season to distribute cloaks, Thullanandā distributed them. She received a scolding for this, and the rule was made that any almswoman, who, thinking that the wrong season was the right season to distribute cloaks, and so distribute them, was to be admonished. It was of great importance that they should know and keep the rules, and thus bring order and obedience into their lives.

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[1] MV., viii., 32, 1.

[2] V., iv., p. 287.

[3] V., iv., p. 283; *cf.* Majjhima, i., 353, where the householder Dasama presented two lengths of cloth for each almsman for apparel, but a suite of three robes to Ānanda.

[4] V., iv., pp. 250-252.

[5] V., iv., p. 245.

The last class of these recipients may be illustated by the story of King Pasēnadi's gifts of his cloaks after he had heard Thullanandā preach at Sāvatthi.[1] She was reprimanded for her shamelessness and greed in asking for the very clothes he was wearing.

When the rainy season was over the faithful often gave cotton-cloth for the use of the Sangha during the ensuing year. The Kathina Ceremony had to be gone through for the proper distribution of the robes,[2] all of which had to be finished by the day of this Ceremony; once they had been presented the earnest almswoman should have few thoughts of a sartorial nature.

It sometimes happened that the laity were unable to give robes. Naturally no blame was attached to them, for unless they wanted, why should they be responsible for the clothing of this huge population? The almswomen, following on a lapse of Thullanandā's, were told that they must not raise hopes where there was a weak expectation.[3] It was a most unseemly thing to make a fuss about receiving robes. If robes that were ready to wear were not given to the almswomen, or if none or only an insufficient amount of the Kathina cloth was forthcoming, then all of the robes or the necessary amount had presumably to be made "out of robes taken from the dust-heap, or out of odd bits picked up in the bazaar."[4] The almsmen made theirs in this way, and though there are no rules in the Vinaya for the almswomen prescribing the manner of making robes, it was probably the same as it was for the men.

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[1] V., iv., p. 255, see above, p. 255.

[2] MV., vii., 1, 3 and note.

[3] V., iv., p. 286.

[4] MV., vii., 1, 6, and *cf.* Dhp. Cmy. on verse 93, where Anuruddha "whose robes were worn out was seeking fresh robes on refuse-heaps and in other similar places."

There is a curious passage in the Vinaya which says that no blame attaches to an almswoman who gives religious cloaks (*cīvara*) to her parents, or if she gives temporarily.[1] With these exceptions it was said to be a pācittiya offence to give them to anyone who lived in a house or to male or female Wanderers. This ruling was laid down in consequence of some complaints made of Thullanandā's attempt to give cloaks to acrobats, dancers, grief dispellers (*sokajjhāyikā*)[2] and drummers. Although in this case, the complaints did not emanate from the lay-people, but from the virtuous almswomen, the laity may well have been beginning to feel the strain of supporting this tremendous and economically unproductive population. Receiving no return in kind for all their donations, they were perhaps beginning to try to make it understood that they would like a little *mutuum commercium* for their charity. That naturally would begin at home. Yet if the almspeople were able to spare anything out of their life consecrated to poverty, either they were models of self-denial, or they were not utterly oppressed by want. Most probably, owing to the generosity of the laity, the almspeople must frequently have had a residue over and above their regulation amount of possessions. In spite of this, the distribution of alms remained, practically speaking, the monopoly of the laity.

In the Vinaya there is only one record that the gift of a store of medicine was made to either of the Sanghas. This was when Visākhā asked to be allowed to provide medicine for the sick almsmen as one of the eight boons she requested the Tathāgata to confer on her for her life.[3] To make up for this deficiency there are several records of help given to individual sick almspeople. There appear to have been various ways in which lay-devotees might render medicinal service to the almswomen. They might hear that certain almswomen were ill, and then go to their cells to visit them; they might go to the vihāra on the chance of finding an invalid; and they might provide medicaments for them. There was no ruling forbidding the entry of secular people into the vihāras, or even into the almswomen's cells.[1] It is twice recorded that a certain layman came to see Thullanandā when she was ill.[2] It might have been the same layman on both occasions. The first time he asked her what he could fetch for her. She said ghee, but when he returned with it from the shop, she said that she did not want ghee, but oil. He went back to the shop and asked to have the ghee changed to oil. He met with no success, for the merchant said that by the taking of ghee, ghee is taken. The layman was vexed with Thullanandā for changing her mind, and consequently it was made into a pācittiya offence for an almswoman to change her mind if that gave trouble to other people. The second time the layman came to see her when she was ill, he enquired after her and said that he would deposit a coin at a shop and that she could have whatever she wanted for it.

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[1] V., iv., p. 285.

[2] The word occurs again at J., vi., 280, defined by Cmy. as "grief-dispellers."

[3] MV., viii., 15, 7.

Thus lay-devotees visited the sick and assisted by procuring medicaments for them. Or, like the devout woman Suppiyā, they might go round the vihāra to see if they sould be of use to anyone who was ill. She evidently made a regular tour of the ārāma at Isipatana, going from cell to cell, and asking, "Who is sick,

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[1] See below, p. 342 ff.; *cf.* Rule at Barking Peckham in 1279, which decreed that no secular man or woman was to enter the nun's chambers, unless a nun were so ill that it was necessary to speak to her there, in which case a confessor, doctor, father or brother might have access to her. Power, *Medieval English Nunneries*, Cambridge, 1923, p. 407.

[2] V., iv., pp. 248, 249.

Reverend Sirs? For whom and what shall I procure?"[1] Her attentions won her the title of chief among those who minister to the sick.[2] Her devotion, her sacrifice of self, though her eye was probably partly on her own reward of merit, reached its zenith when she cut a piece of flesh from her own thigh so as to supply an ill almsman with some broth at a time when there was no meat to be had.[3]

There is no doubt that the almswomen had hankerings after medicine. On four separate occasions the laity made collections for the Chapter of Almswomen,[4] and earmarked these twice for cloaks and twice for rice, and deposited them in a certain shop. The lay-people gave particulars of the arrangements they had made to the almswomen, but these thought of medicine instead. It was made a matter for admonition if the almswomen asked to buy anything with the money except those goods which the laymen told them that they had destined for their comfort. Since they were still on sufferance with the laity, it would have been a matter of prudence to fall in with their wishes, and impolitic to go against them. For there was ever present the question of what they were to do if the laity were to desert them.

Gifts of dwellings from the laity to the almswomen, although not frequently mentioned, were made from time to time. Sāḷho made the gift of a vihāra; it incidentally promoted a law-suit, instigated by Thullanandā;[5] and another layman gave a vihāra to the Council of Almswomen.[6]

Besides these two men, there were two women who increased the resources of the Order in this way: Ambapālī,[7] and Mātika's mother who not only fed the almsmen with delicious food, but also offered to support them during the rains.[8] "Thinking to themselves, 'With her assistance we shall be free from anxiety on the score of food and shall be able to effect escape from Becoming,'" they consented, and she had a monastery erected "to serve as their place of residence."

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[1] MV., vi., 23, 1.
[2] Ang., i., p. 26.
[3] MV., vi., 23, 3.
[4] V., iv., pp. 250-253.
[5] V., iv., p. 211.
[6] V., iv., p. 287.
[7] See above, p. 90.
[8] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 35.

These were big enterprises, which not everyone had the means to undertake. But other forms of dwelling-places, or appurtenances belonging to them, could also be given with profit. Accordingly anyone not capable of launching out on a large scale, but yet wishing to give some kind of building, could gratify himself by presenting small erections. It is, for example, recorded that a certain layman gave a shed or a stable (*uddosita*) to the Council of Almswomen,[1] probably one in which they could keep their implements or firewood. Once more, in the Vinaya, it is recorded that a certain lay-disciple gave to the Council of Almswomen a servant's lodge or stable to live in.[2]

All the gifts of dwellings were made to the Sanghas in their totality. No mention is ever made of conditions for their upkeep. The laity would almost necessarily have been responsible, since the recluses were bound to poverty, but it is not clear whether the onus lay with the original donor or with the community at large.

Thus, by the munificence of the laity, were their motives self-seeking or were they philanthropic, the almswomen were provided with the four requisites: food, clothes, medicine and dwellings.

In addition, the laity must have been extremely useful to the almspeople in providing them from time to time with a resting-place or with a night's shelter.[3]

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[1] V., iv., p. 223, *uddosita* is a word of uncertain derivation.

[2] CV., x., 24, 1.

[3] *Cf.* Saṃy. Nik., i., 5, § 7.

> "Say of what folk by day and night
> For ever doth the merit grow? . . .
> They who . . . (to the homeless) shelter give."

As it is recorded, the almsman Upananda went to the house of a friend of his among the laity, and passed the night (*nisajjaṃ kappesi*) in the house of that man's wife.[1] The word used for "passed the night" implies nothing more than that he slept in the house, not that they had any improper relations with one another. Still the rub came the next day, for the husband asked him three times to go, and three times the wife entreated him to stay.[2]

Where good and reliable almsmen made use of such hospitality, there is evidence to show that a new convert was sometimes the reward—a reward both for those who provided the hospitality, and a reward for those who took it. The making of the rules resulted from behaviour which was in some way obnoxious. Hence only this is recorded. Unrecorded conversions at casual meetings where there had been nothing but conduct so modest, circumspect and decorous as to pass without comment, have largely to be inferred. The records mostly contain tales of grossness, corruption or error such as could best be stemmed by the making of rules. Anuruddha, faced by a certain woman, who, if she could, would have beguiled him from the saintly way, converted her.[3] She was a woman who kept a house which was used as a hostel (*āvasathāgāra*) by the almspeople. He went there and said to her: "Sister (*bhaginī*), if it is not disagreeable to you, we[4] would spend the night in your hostel." Then others came and asked for a night's shelter, and were taken in. At this point the woman asked Anuruddha to leave the hostel and sleep in her house with her. He consented. It is possible that he had a premonition of what, as it is recorded, really happened: that she would offer herself to be his wife, and offer him her property, but that he would be secure enough and insistent enough to discourse to her without wavering, and in the end to convert her. Or it is possible that he rose to the occasion as it unfolded itself. Her whole-hearted acclamation of his discourse must have gratified him for having shown the way to a woman who at first must have appeared to be unpromising as a possible convert. But her speech on conversion left little or nothing to be desired: "Wonderful, sir (*abhikkantam bhante*), wonderful, sir, just as one might set up what has been upset, or open what is covered, or show the way to a bewildered man, or bring an oil lamp into the dark, so that looking with the eyes one might see things, even so has the Dhamma been set forth in many ways by the Venerable Anuruddha. I, Sir, take refuge in the Lord, in the Dhamma, and in the Sangha of almsmen. May Your Reverence consider me as a lay-follower who has gone for refuge from to-day onwards for life."[1] Records of such conversions are priceless treasures, protests against remembering nothing but what was shameful.

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[1] V., iv., p. 94. [2] *Ibid.* [3] V., iv., p. 17 ff.

[4] He used the plural, but was probably alone.

Even although no harm, but only good, came from this episode, such a situation was regarded as fraught with possible dangers, from which monastic life must immediately be secured. For where Anuruddha had been only indiscreet, others might go further. In order to prevent any such contingency it was made a pācittiya offence for an almsman to sleep for a night at a woman's house.[2] Henceforth they should go in twos or in companies.

The almswomen, too, profited in these ways by the hospitality of the laity. Caṇḍakālī went so far as actually to live in a layman's household, until the pious almswomen complained.[3]

It is further said that on one occasion many almswomen went into a village and sleeping places were arranged for them; but because a man attacked one woman who was put to sleep alone, it was made into a sanghadisesa offence for an almswoman to dwell at night separately and alone.[1] Indeed, crimes of violence are mentioned so often in some parts of the Vinaya that an impression is created of a land infested by thieves and brutal men constantly on the look out for the violation or molestation of unprotected women. Various disasters of this kind led to the definite prohibition being laid upon almswomen to travel alone,[2] unless armed, in districts considered suspicious or dangerous, either within the kingdom or beyond the boundary. This reads as though the Community of Almswomen possessed arms, and also as though the almswomen knew how to use them. If so, it is difficult to see the force of the Bhikkhus' Pācittiya,[3] which stated that no almsman was by appointment to travel along a high road with an almswoman, or even to go so far as the village, unless the road were so dangerous that travellers had to carry arms. Further, it is nowhere said that the almswomen practised methods of defence.

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[1] V., iv., p. 19. This is a usual formula used on conversion.

[2] V., iv., p. 19.

[3] V., iv., p. 293.

Naturally enough, a certain proportion of the regulations dealing with the almswomen's conduct with regard to men was formulated with the intention of preventing them from coming to harm at the hands of men. The rape of Uppalavaṇṇā had been a serious warning;[4] and Subhā of Jīvaka's Mango-Grove[5] had also had a disagreeable experience. A libertine of Rājagaha barred her way as she was going to her siesta, and solicited her to sensual pleasures. She told him that she had voluntarily chosen renunciation, and she taught him the Dhamma, all to no purpose. Then seeing "his passion for the beauty of her eyes," she extracted one of them, thus curing him of his lust, but at sight of the Maſter, her eye became as it was before: a legendary accretion obviously inserted later.

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[1] V., iv., pp. 228-229.

[2] V., iv., pp. 295, 296.

[3] Vinaya, *Pācittiya Dhamma*, 27, and *cf.* 67.

[4] *Cf.* above, p. 155 ff.

[5] Therīgāthā, lxxi., and Cmy.

These events contributed to the formulation of various other rules forbidding the almswomen to go about singly. They were forbidden to go into a village alone;[1] and to cross a ferry alone with a man.[2] If he were an almsman the rule was slightly less ſtringent, for it was said that an almsman muſt not go on board a boat by appointment with an almswoman, except for the purpose of crossing over to the other side;[3] they muſt not go up or down ſtream together. Almswomen were forbidden to dwell at night alone, separately,[4] and to drop out of file alone.[5] Pācittiya offences were incurred if an almswoman should ſtand alone and talk with a man in the dark of the night when there was very little light,[6] or in a hidden place,[7] which according to the Old Commentary means hiding by a door, wall, screen, or out of doors, or on the high road or in a blind alley, or at the cross-roads.[8] Thus ſtanding alone with a man was allowed in no circumſtances, not even if he were a relative. If those whose conduct had led to the making of the rules had been relatives, this fact is almoſt always mentioned. No difference was made for them, for every man from a father to one who was no relation should be regarded in the same way by all the almswomen. This body of minute rules grew up as the almswomen tried to circumvent each one of them as it was made. Forbidden to ſtand in the dark with a man, but not yet forbidden to ſtand in a secret place, one did this, and so on, until almoſt every possibility became doomed. In addition to these, there were the two other important rules,[1] the breaking of which merited expulsion from the Order.

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[1] V., iv., pp. 228, 237.

[2] V., iv., p. 228.

[3] Vinaya, *Pāc. Dhamma*, 28.

[4] V., iv., p. 229. Here also these three rules are given together, *cf.* above, p. 338.

[5] V., iv., pp. 229, 230.

[6] V., iv., p. 268.

[7] V., iv., p. 269.

[8] V., iv., p. 270.

Thus their freedom of action was more and more curtailed. Even so, some restrictions kept the attitude of the laity in mind, and were so framed as not entirely to rob them of their sources of working merit. Once a kindly brahmin lady invited a company of almswomen who arrived at her house late one evening, to come in until her husband returned.[2] They stretched themselves out without asking leave. When the brahmin came home he apparently was so much disgusted with them, that he had them dragged out of the house. A pācittiya rule was made that the almswomen must not behave in this manner; not that they must not go into the houses of the laity. That would have been to deprive the laity of one of the supposed channels of acquiring merit.

With all these opportunities for meeting and communication open to them, there can be but little doubt that in the beginning extensive association between the almswomen and the laity of both sexes formed a feature of the social structure. In addition to the giving and receiving of alms or wisdom there was a third form of association, which arose rather naturally because of the existence of those other two. It consisted of the warp and woof of daily life. From the almspeople's point of view this was regularised by what was permissible, what was to be guarded against and what was unlawful.

Whatever restrictions became imposed as time went on, it was not possible, in the nature of the case, entirely to prevent chances for casual meetings. Nor would it have been in harmony with Buddhist conceptions to have done so. The almswomen were not intended to feel or to act as if they lived in a prison. It was not a close Order. Indeed, the very words " the homeless life is in the open " can be taken literally: it had to be so if the Order and through it the Dhamma were to persist and to spread. Unless the fourfold Congregation were firmly knitted together and its unity sustained by the frequent personal access of the members to one another, it could not present a strong unyielding front to the forces of Brahmanism and of other divergent sects. These were surging all round, ready to insinuate themselves into weak places, and to absorb the unstable in faith; ready even to attempt to defame the Teacher himself and to bring him to public scorn. The discovery of Ciñcā's ruse to make Gotama appear as if he had stooped to improper relations with her[1] only revealed her as the imposter and cat's-paw of a jealous sect that she was, and cast no shadow of suspicion upon him. But such a story goes to show some of the dangers which had to be reckoned with, and hence the vital importance of keeping his followers together.

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[1] V., iv., pp. 213, 220, 221; see above, p. 267.

[2] V., iv., p. 274.

Hence if almswomen lived in seclusion, as the modest ones came to believe was so desirable as to amount almost to a virtue,[2] a seclusion in the narrow sense of not wasting time with the laity and of not becoming involved in avoidable difficulties with them, must have been meant. For the seclusion enjoined was not intended to prevent excursions for alms, expeditions on various errands, touring in all but the rainy season, and preaching to the laity. These were duties which had to be performed. In the exercise of them all the almswomen would often be in situations demanding a degree of self-control which could never have been evolved by a life lived in utter seclusion. The governing idea was that those who had learnt to restrain the body, tongue and senses were on a fairer way towards arahanship than those whose wills had been allowed to atrophy from want of use. Lay-people, too, from other reasons, doubtless tried to live a life of self-restraint. Life would be pleasanter, happier and smoother, if the prickles and thorns of irritability, ill-temper, anger, and jealousy were removed. For the almswomen this kind of self-restraint, which they had also to cultivate, was but a preliminary clearing of the way and freeing of the mind for the great effort of meditation. Failure to cultivate strenuous effort, tranquillity and poised equanimity was said to entail the arising of Cankers which destroy and consume,[1] but that "he in whom the Cankers are gone which are to be severally got rid of by scrutiny, by restraint, by use, by endurance, by avoidance, by removal and by culture—he it is who is said to have all the Cankers in restraint, he has cut off craving, shed his bonds, and by fathoming false pride has made an end of ill."[2] To the almswomen's credit be it said that restraint in relation to men was not insistently emphasised over and above restraint in other directions. Although there is a notable absence of warnings to almswomen to be on their guard in relation to men,[3] warnings were insinuated in other ways, often undifferentiated from prohibitions. Almswomen were not liable to one source of temptation which befell the almsmen: on the alms-round the food given was usually offered by women.

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[1] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 176.

[2] V., iv., pp. 294, 326.

Yet other sources of unseemly behaviour remained. The almsmen's vihāras were open to the laity and are recorded to have been visited by laywomen;[4] likewise the almswomen's vihāras were open to the laity and are recorded to have been visited by laymen. Visits sometimes took place if the almswomen were ill;[5] and sometimes workmen came to do repairs to the buildings.[1] There was nothing to prevent them from seeing the almswomen. This is shown by the records of their complaints that the almswomen were behaving like the women of the world; now because they were making collections of bowls;[2] and again because they were using scented soap and shampooing and massaging themselves or getting others to do this for them.[3]

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[1] Majjhima, i., 11. [2] *Ibid.*, i., 11, 12.

[3] Warnings to almsmen to be on their guard against women occur at Dhp., 284; Majjhima, i., 462; Saṃy. Nik., i., 6, § 8; i., 8, § 6; Theragāthā, verses 737, 738.

[4] V., iii., p. 127. Theragāthā, cclxiv.; Saṃy. Nik., viii., 1, § 1.

[5] V., iv., pp. 248-250.

Sometimes, too, their offences were of a graver nature. Just as almsmen misconducted themselves with almswomen and with laywomen, so almswomen misconducted themselves with almsmen and with laymen. As the first was reciprocal, no more mention of it may be made here.[4] A case in point of the last was the almswoman who had previously been in the King's harem, and who was often visited by him.[5] Until the pious almswomen had found out and had become indignant, she had taken preventive measures, for she knew that almswomen who were pregnant were considered to have fallen away from the holy life.[6] The almswomen themselves had said so, "*abrahmacārinī ayaṃ bhikkhunī gabbhinīti.*"[7] Thullanandā had got into trouble for concealing the knowledge that Sundarīnandā had given birth to a child,[8] a result of her invitation to Sāḷho, who was in love with her, to come and visit her in her vihāra.[9] One woman was exculpated as it was found that she had conceived before she entered the Order.[10] Another humane exception to the rules was made in favour of another almswoman in similar circumstances: she was permitted, companioned by a second almswoman, to bring up her male child in the Order until he attained to years of discretion, on condition that they conducted themselves towards him exactly as they would towards other men, save only as regards sleeping under the same roof.[1]

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[1] V., iv., pp. 288, 289, 342; *cf.* Rule ascribed to St. Pachomius, where it is said that if nuns needed help for building they might employ the same men who worked for the monks, but these workers must return to the monks' house at the hour of refection. Bateson, *Origin and Early History of Double Monasteries*, p. 139.

[2] V., iv., p. 243.

[3] V., iv., pp. 342-343.

[4] See above, p. 276 ff.

[5] V., iv., p. 261.

[6] V., iii., pp. 205, 206.

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] V., iv., pp. 216, 217.

[9] V., iv., p. 212.

[10] *Cf.* below, p. 358 ff.

These were the kind of difficulties which had to be met and dealt with. It was impossible that among Gotama's followers, who were numerous both on the religious and on the lay sides, there should not have been some who took an illegal advantage of their close and frequent association. On the other hand, there were certain forces which counteracted the dangers of non-claustration for the almswomen: no rigid, frozen asceticism was demanded of them; laywomen did not live in seclusion; and the teaching was an inspiration to lead the good life by willing to follow the things of the mind. This applied both to the laity and to the almspeople, and the strength with which the great majority felt its force is proved by the predominance of good over evil in their relations.

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[1] CV., x., 25, 1-2.

CHAPTER V (*continued*)

THE ORDER AND THE LAITY. PART II

Life of Visākhā.

THERE was one outstanding laywoman supporter whose life depicted the noblest kind of relationship between the laity and the almspeople. This was Visākhā, one of the greatest lay-benefactors of the Order. Her interest in it and her devoutness expressed itself in a diversity of gifts, including the four requisites and also others; in friendly criticism; in sustained support in upholding the Buddhist teaching and discipline; and in securing a number of converts. She thus epitomised some of the customary relations between the laity and the Sanghas. Hence it will not be out of place perhaps to give her story here. Much of it is to be found in the Dhammapada Commentary, several references are made to her in the Vinaya and in the Udāna, and a long dialogue between her and Gotama is recorded in the Anguttara Nikāya.

Her grandfather was Meṇḍaka, a great merchant (*seṭṭhi*) of much merit and illimitable wealth in the city of Bhaddiya in King Bimbisāra's territory. Her father, Dhanañjaya, also ranked as a great merchant, and he and her mother, Sumanā, were both people of great merit. Before Visākhā was sixteen years old, Gotama came to their city and Meṇḍaka sent his grand-daughter to hear him preach. The tremendous number of girl attendants, slaves and chariots which were commanded for her retinue are indications of the luxury in which she was brought up. Well-bred and living in the midst of all these people, she developed to the full the strong sense of etiquette which must have been innate in her. On this occasion she knew how to approach Gotama with reverence: he was pleased with her behaviour, taught her, and she and her attendants attained to the fruit of conversion. Later, when the family, at King Pasēnadi's request, had moved into his territory, and she was chosen in marriage by Puṇṇavaḍḍhana, son of Migāra, a great merchant of Sāvatthi, as a woman endowed with the five beauties (beauty of hair, of flesh, of bone, of skin, of youth), she sent a message to her father to send a chariot for her return; for she knew that once daughters of influential families have been decorated with the gold wreath, they must return in chariots, and not in ordinary conveyances, nor walking under a palm-leaf parasol. Another instance of her knowledge of etiquette, and also of the reliance that her father placed in it, was apparent when her father-in-law-to-be and Pasēnadi were coming to stay with them; her father asked her which house he should prepare for Migāra and which for the King. "Now clever was the great merchant's daughter, with a fully matured and keen intellect. . . . And she gave orders."

Although she was as "strong as five elephants,"[1] she was amply decorous in her behaviour. On the occasion when her suitor's brahmin friends were come to discover whether she fulfilled the only conditions of wifehood for him, they were caught in a rainstorm. But she refused to run into shelter, for she thought that no woman appears to advantage when rushing about like a man. Filial duty also restrained her pace. She fully realised that daughters are nothing to their parents but goods for sale, marriageable articles, and she would not compromise this position by taking the risk of a possible fall as she ran.

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[1] A usual expression denoting great strength.

The marriage festivities occupied four months; probably rather longer than had been anticipated, for the supply of wood ordered for the army's cooking purposes became exhausted. Indeed, this unforeseen prolongation occurred because it was impossible for the goldsmiths to create the intricate "great creeper-*parure*,"[1] the gift of Dhanañjaya to his daughter, under this time. The completed ornament was worth fabulous sums, and reached from head to foot when on. It was magnificent in the extreme, part of it resembling a live peacock so exactly that people had to come quite close in order to discover that in reality it was made of silver and jewels. Visākhā, highly civilised and feminine to her finger-tips, was not unnaturally proud of this splendid ornament. But as time went on, it became a trouble to her by reason of its great weight, and her father-in-law had a smaller one made for her. The great creeper-*parure* also became a burden to her conscience. As she developed in asceticism of thought she became sensitive about wearing it when she went to hear Gotama preach. She feared that on these occasions it would be unseemly to be adorned by anything so costly, and feared that it might divert the thoughts of those who should be unworldly away from the Noble Eightfold Way. Once she is recorded to have removed it.[2]

The wedding celebrations over, she departed with an enormous retinue and a comprehensive dowry for

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[1] It is said (Warren, p. 461) "The giving of robes by a woman attains its fruition in the great creeper *parure*." This must be a later interpolation, for in the Vinaya, *Pātimokkha Nissaggiya Pācittiya Dhamma*, 6-9, the gift of robes by householders' wives is not connected with any especially arresting fruit of merit. The notion recurs in the Jātakas:

"Chief among men, and chief of women she,
Who gives an upper robe in charity.
She that gives pleasant things is sure to win
A home divine and fair to enter in." (Jātaka, 243.)

[2] V., iv., p. 162.

Sāvatthi. There, instead of keeping the gifts which were showered upon her by the inhabitants of the city, so thoughtful was she for others that she made a distribution of them, each one accompanied by an affectionate message. Another incident, typical of her humanity and kindness, was her nocturnal visit to her mare who was foaling. Visākhā insisted on going herself to the stable, and on attending in all necessary ways to the animal. This interest in others and the real desire to shed happiness later found a wide channel for expansion in her activities on behalf of the Order.

Her husband was a "heretic," that is to say, he was disposed to favour the Naked Ascetics, and in his house she missed the Buddhist atmosphere to which she had been accustomed in her own house. But he was not actively hostile to the Buddha, and he realised that he must do nothing to anger his wife's influential family. Therefore when Gotama came to stay at Sāvatthi, and she asked permission to invite him and his Fraternity to the house, Puṇṇavaḍḍhana, her husband, did not refuse her request. She accordingly received them the next day, and sent word twice to her father-in-law to come and hear Gotama preach the Dhamma. Migāra consented, the Naked Ascetics, whose doctrine he also had hitherto believed in, being unable to dissuade him. He was converted by what he heard, acknowledging himself thus: "Reverend Sir, all this time I have been without knowing that on you one should bestow alms to receive great rewards. But now I have learnt it, thanks to my daughter-in-law, and am released from all danger of being born in a lower state of becoming." Here is a clear statement, if ever there was one, of the reason for bestowing alms. Visākhā is sometimes referred to as Migāra's mother, from the fact that she converted her father-in-law. "From this day forth you are my mother," he had exclaimed in gratitude. She invited Gotama to her house again for the following day; on this visit her mother-in-law was converted. She was thus already the means of securing two converts. Open doors were henceforth kept at their house for the religion of the Buddha. It may be assumed that other members of their household also adopted it as their religion, and that some, at least, of her many healthy[1] children and nephews, and of her many grandchildren were brought up in it. Among her children were two sons, one of whom she called Migāra. The other was called Migajāla.[2] The confession of his *aññā* on attaining arahanship, saturated as it is with the splendours which fall to a follower of the Noble Eightfold Way, suggests beyond all doubt that love towards Dhamma was instilled into him from his earliest years.

The moderation of the views set forth by the Founder must have appealed strongly to a woman of Visākhā's temperament. Since Gotama inculcated only a modified form of asceticism for the almspeople, the simple life, and never mortification, she could let her sympathetic imagination devise schemes for adding to the comfort of the almsmen and for removing some of the physical hardships which, instead of being a help, were a hindrance to the attainment of nirvāna.

According to the Dhammapada Commentary, after the conversion of her father-in-law and her mother-in-law, almost the next incident in Visākhā's career was the bestowal on her of the eight boons by Gotama. The fact only is stated in the Dhammapada Commentary, and no account is given. But there is a full description of this important event in the Vinaya.[3] Gotama and the company of almsmen had been taking their meal at Visākhā's mansion. She had experienced a little difficulty in letting them know that the time for the meal was come. It had been raining, and the servant whom she sent to announce the hour to them, seeing the almsmen standing uncloaked[1] in the rain, thought that they were Naked Ascetics, and not Gotama's followers at all. She returned to Visākhā, only to be told to go back. This time all the almsmen had gone into their cells, and the servant then thought that the ārāma was empty and that there were no almsmen there. This incident seems to have determined Visākhā to ask that she might be allowed to give robes for the rainy season, together with other things, for when the meal was over she said to Gotama: "Eight are the boons, Lord, that I beg of the Blessed One . . . I desire, Lord, my life long to bestow robes for the rainy season upon the Sangha, and food for the incoming almsmen, and food for the sick and food for those that wait upon the sick, and medicine for the sick, and a constant supply of congey, and bathing robes for the almswomen."[2] She gave thought-out reasons why each of these boons should be conferred, vibrant with sympathy for the difficulties to be met in the material life of the Order. On being further questioned by Gotama as to the advantages which she had in view, not for the almspeople, but for herself, in asking for these boons, she gave a frank and illuminating reply. She said that if she heard that an almsman had been at Sāvatthi, she might reasonably deduce that he had partaken of her *largesse*, and "then will gladness spring up in me on calling that to mind; and joy will arise in me thus gladdened; and so rejoicing all my frame will be at peace; and being thus at peace I will experience a blissful feeling of content; and in that bliss my heart will be at rest; and that will be to me an exercise of my moral sense, an exercise of my moral powers, an exercise of the seven kinds of wisdom."[1] Thus the donor benefited as well as the recipients and altruiﬅic philanthropy is seen to have had an egoiﬅic motive. Gotama granted her the boons, saying: "It is well, it is well, Visākhā. You have done well in asking for the eight boons of the Tathāgata with such advantages in view." Although the editors of the Jātakas saw fit to insert the phrase "Visākhā, the great lay Siﬅer, notwithﬅanding her womanhood, received eight boons at the Dasabala's hands,"[2] they yet could not fail to admire her: "Great are her virtues." But the traditional notions concerning women were reappearing at the time that the Jātakas were written down.

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[1] *Cf.* V., iii., p. 187.

[2] Theragāthā, ccxvii.

[3] MV., viii., 15.

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[1] This is the probable meaning, and not "naked," as Warren translates it. Buddhists were always against nudity, so much affected by the Acelakas and Ājīvikas. The *uttara cīvara* or *uttarāsanga* (toga) was donned on leaving the vihāra grounds as being more decent.

[2] MV., viii., 15, 6-7.

Her generosity seemed to know no bounds. She continued to give alms and to do other deeds of merit. However simple the daily fare of the almsmen, it could have been no small monetary drain conﬅantly to feed the huge congregation that by now, according to the accounts, surrounded Gotama. For example, it is said: "For every day two thousand almsmen take their meals in the house of Anāthapiṇḍika at Sāvatthi, and a like number in the house of the eminent female lay-disciple, Visākhā."[3] And again it is said: "Every day two thousand almsmen go to the house of Anāthapiṇḍika for food, medicine and so forth; five hundred to the house of Culla Anāthapiṇḍika, and a like number to the houses of Visākhā and Suppavāsā."[4]

"Other deeds of merit" are also recounted in the Vinaya. It was at Sāvatthi that she gave a towel (for wiping the face) to Gotama[5] "that that may be to me for a long time for a blessing and for good."[6] After she had been gladdened by his religious discourse and had left, "passing him on her right side,[1] "he told the almsmen that he allowed them a cloth with which to wipe their faces. On another occasion recorded later[2] she brought earthenware foot-scrapers, small jars and brooms, asking Gotama to accept them "that they may be to me for long a blessing and a joy." The foot-scrapers were, however, a forbidden article, and Gotama would not permit them. He allowed only "sandstone, gravel and sea-foam (bones of the cuttle-fish) with which to wipe the feet." He allowed the almsmen to use the small jars and brooms and also the fans and flower-stands which Visākhā offered as well.[3]

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[1] MV., viii., 15, 13. This is a ﬅock formula for expressing pleasure.

[2] Jātaka Cmy. on 489.

[3] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 18.

[4] *Ibid.*, on verse 47.

[5] MV., viii., 18.

[6] A usual formula.

Her intimate knowledge of the requirements of the almsmen was made possible since they did not live in seclusion, remote from humankind, but were in close contact with the laity and open to visits from them. It is reported that Visākhā attended sermons in the monastery, and also that, in company with her friend, Suppiyā, "she wandered about the monastery to see what could be done for the different almsmen who were coming in, or going out, or who were sick."

This accessibility to the vihāras on two occasions laid an almsman open to rebuke from Visākhā for indiscreet behaviour. She is twice recorded to have reprimanded Udāyi for sitting alone and apart in the house of a layman with a girl. She pointed out to him that although such conduct was not wrong in itself and had not been proscribed, it might prove to be a hindrance to the spread of the Dhamma, muddying it so that the unconverted would feel no call to become converted.[4] As a result of her representations to Gotama such conduct came to be looked upon as an Aniyata (undetermined offence).

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[1] A formality expressive of honour. Therīgāthā, verse 307 ; Therīgāthā Cmy. on lxiii. ; *cf.* Saṃy. Nik., i., 1, § 1 ; ii., 1, § 1 ; iv., 3, § 2 ; *ibid.*, vi., 1, § 10.

[2] CV., v., 22, 1.

[3] CV., v., 22, 2. The Kandy nuns to-day are allowed the use of palm-leaf fans.

[4] V., iii., pp. 187, 191.

In the Udāna it is twice recorded that Visākhā went at an unseasonable hour to Gotama himself.[1] Both visits are said to have occurred at the vihāra built by her at the eastern side of Sāvatthi, and presented to the Order. Gotama did not rebuke Visākhā for visiting him at an unusual time, still less did he refuse to see her, but merely asked (on both occasions): "Pray, how is it, Visākhā, that you visit me thus at an unseasonable hour?" She gave as her reason for her first visit her failure to extract some favour from King Pasēnadi; she then apparently went straight to Gotama, in the hope of finding comfort in the words of wisdom which she knew must fall from his lips. Pertinent as all his answers were, on this occasion he "breathed forth this solemn utterance:

> "'All weakness is pain, all power is happiness;
> When some struggle has to be encountered, men grieve;
> It is hard to escape from the bondage thereof.'"

Her reason for her second visit recorded in the Udāna was to find consolation on the death of her little grandson whom she loved dearly. Gotama pointed out to her that the relation between the number of loved ones and the number of sorrows is a one-one relation. Therefore where there is no loved one there can be no sorrow, for

> "Whatsoever of sorrow, lamentation and pain there is in this world,
> All this arises from clinging; where clinging is not, these are not,
> Therefore happy and sorrowless are those who cling not to anything in the world.
> Set not your affections on the things of the earth."

But having loved and lost it would have been impossible for Visākhā not to grieve on this occasion. The living of such a philosophy needs a long training. The counsel could not avail then, but attempts might be made in the future to guide the direction of the will —away from love of possessions and of people, and implied, though not stated here, towards understanding the Dhamma. Life in the East—or anywhere—trembles with uncertainty, and sudden death lurks hiding in every quarter. The imminence of catastrophe was brought vividly home to Visākhā by the loss of her little grandson. Realising that a similar fate might at any moment overtake any of her other numerous children or grandchildren, she must have craved for some power of resistance with which to fight possible future disasters.

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[1] Udāna, *Mucilinda*, § 9, *Pātalagāmi*, 8, trans. D. M. Strong.

How soon, if ever, she was able to put affection from her, and thus be immune from grief, does not appear. But evidently she was not able to follow this austere course after only one instruction. For another story is given in the Dhammapada Commentary,[1] where she, "unable to control her grief, went sad and sorrowful to the Teacher." Dattā, her son's daughter, had died. On this occasion Gotama is again represented as pointing out to her the mental and moral devastation which affection brings in its train.

> "From affection springs grief; from affection springs fear.
> He that is free from affection neither sorrows nor fears."

This may be very true, but it is a hard teaching, monkish in its weariness of affection, and in the desire to escape from an emotional colouring in life; in denying part of human nature, set on atrophying that part. Was it Gotama's way of consolation, we may wonder, or was it the monk editors', putting their views into the sayings they attributed to him?

Visākhā's free access both to the monasteries and to Gotama himself may have been as much by reason of her generosity and the gratitude it inspired as by reason of her merit and devoutness. She evidently acquired a certain amount of authority in matters concerning the Order, and her criticism at times determined a change in, or at least a defining of the rules. For example, because the almsmen would not confer the pabbajjā Ordination on her grandson[1] during the rainy season she became angry and was annoyed. In her view, it seems, the duties of the Sanghas should be carried out at all seasons. Some of the almsmen heard her complaints and informed Gotama. The result was the formulation of a rule by which an agreement for preventing that ceremony from being carried out in the rainy season entailed a dukkata offence. If admission to the membership of the Order were impossible during the months when the laity saw most of the almspeople, the number of adherents to the religion would not increase as fast as it otherwise might. From this comparatively small cause of a woman's feeling, sore that a member of her family was not admitted when he wished to be, an important step was taken towards gaining easier and more rapid entry into the Order, thereby enlarging it more quickly and consolidating the religion more firmly.

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[1] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 213, and *cf.* Dhp., 215.

Her next great benefaction to the Order was the gift of the monetary equivalent for her great creeper-*parure*, the proceeds of which she spent on building a seven-storied vihāra with a terrace or veranda (*ālinda*) to it, supported on pillars with capitals of elephants' heads.[2] It came about in this way. She had inadvertently left her great *parure* behind in the monastery after attending a sermon, and when she heard that Ānanda had put it by for her, the conviction came over her that she could not wear an article which the Master had touched. She decided to sell it and to make suitable offerings to the Sangha in its place. But no purchaser could be found, both because it was so expensive, and because on all the earth only three women possessed one. One of these was Visākhā herself; the second was Mallikā, the wife of Bandhula, the General of the Mallas; and the third was another Mallikā, daughter of a great merchant of Benares. Since she found that she could not get rid of it, she paid the price of it herself, and asked Gotama which of the four requisites she should give to the Order. He chose "a dwelling place at the East end for the congregation of the almsmen." Visākhā was very much pleased at this request, and obtained the help of Moggallāna, famous for his magical arts, to build it. The work took thirteen months. During the last four, while Gotama was there, Visākhā daily dispensed alms to him and to the fraternity. At the end of this time she spent vast sums in providing the almsmen and novices with stuff for robes, and with medicine, and when all was completed she gave a lavish opening ceremony. Two hundred and seventy millions in all, it is said, were spent by her on the religion of the Buddha. With truth the Commentary remarks: "No other woman in the world was as liberal as this one who lived in the house of a heretic." The joy at her heart inspired her to a solemn utterance, breathed forth in her sweet voice, for the gift of a vihāra was the culmination of all her hopes. For long she had desired to give a mansion, household goods, provisions, robes and medicines to the Order, and now that all her wishes had been fulfilled, she reaped the reward of fragrant delight. The Vihārā was greatly appreciated and several instances of Gotama residing at her mansion are recorded.[1]

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[1] MV., iii., 13, 1-2.

[2] *Cf.* CV., vi., 14.

Judging by the handsome number of gifts that Visākhā made, it might be expected that she would acquire a corresponding amount of merit. But the Buddhist metaphysical view is not based on any such economic considerations, and gifts in plenty are not thought to be more efficacious than gifts according to means.

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[1] Majjhima, iii., 78, 104; Theragāthā, verses 1164, 1192; Dialogues,iii., 80; Saṃy. Nik., iii., 2, § 1; viii., § 7; Ang., i., pp. 127, 128.

Even so, she was a continuous giver, and one upon whom Gotama could rely to give freely wherever diplomacy in the interests of the Order pointed. She was always ready to do his bidding. For example, when it was heard that the "litigious, contentious, quarrelsome, disputatious Bhikkhus of Kosambi" were coming to Sāvatthi, the leading almspeople and lay-disciples approached Gotama to find out from him how they should behave.[1] He gave them all unbiassed and appropriate advice, affecting no partisanship. He instructed the twelve Chief Almsmen to "side with those who are right according to the Dhamma," and Mahāpajāpatī to "hear the Dhamma on both sides, decide which side is right according to the Dhamma, and take those matters of the Chapter of Almswomen which have to be referred to the Chapter of Almsmen, to the party which is right." His instruction to the two householders, man and woman, Anāthapiṇḍika and Visākhā, was the same. It began: "Bestow gifts on both sides," then hear the Dhamma on both sides, and decide which set of almsmen is right according to the Dhamma.

Both Mahāpajāpatī and Visākhā were considered to be endowed with as reliable powers of discretion as the men, and to possess as thorough a knowledge of the Dhamma as the men. That their mental stature was estimated to be of equal growth is evident from the fact that it was not suggested to either of the women that she should consult with the almsmen as to which of the disputants was right according to the Dhamma. A religion which allows this amount of independence of judgment to its women members, and does not differentiate between the capacity of the two sexes, is ennobled, for the women rise and justify the faith which is placed in them. The two, Mahāpajāpatī and Visākhā, never wavered in their loyalty, and Visākhā, by her constant gifts of alms, clothes and dwellings, and also by her criticism, was an unflagging help in the process of binding the almspeople together and to the laity. She may indeed be regarded as a true and faithful mother to the religion. The almsmen regarded her as a trusted friend of the Order. It is reported that some of them used to take their food and eat it in her house or in Anāthapiṇḍika's;[1] for although they had received it at the King's palace, nobody was friendly to them there.

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[1] MV., x., 5, 3.

Ardent, liberal and persistently thoughtful for the Order as she was, yet Visākhā had no thoughts of joining it herself as an almswoman; nor apparently did Gotama ever urge her to adopt such a course. He himself was not of a monkish disposition; not one whose innermost convictions told him that the life of renunciation was the best life. And, according to his conception of the cosmical laws, Visākhā especially, by her generosity and faith would be certain of gaining nirvāna. Also, Gotama thought of the many, of the man himself (*purisa*, *puggala*) in each one, and realised that if she gave up her worldly goods in order to become an almswoman, a means to help many another to enter and to remain on the Way would be cut off.

If she had entered the Order she could not have given more evidence of her whole-hearted devotion to it than she did as a laywoman. Since Gotama himself resided much at Sāvatthi and she was usually accessible, he frequently consulted her, knowing that he could depend upon her to give judgments based on a ripe experience of the world, and unwarped by any private prejudices. For example, she gave valuable help when called upon to investigate the case of the almswoman who gave birth to a child while she was in the Order.[2] Devadatta decreed that she should be expelled, for fear any reproach should be cast upon the almswomen whom he had instructed. The mother declared that she had conceived the child before and not after she had entered the Order, and asked to be taken to Gotama. The case was put without reservation into Visākhā's hands, and she proved the woman's innocence.

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[1] Jātaka Cmy. on 464.

[2] Theragāthā Cmy. on clxi.; Dhp. Cmy. on verse 160; Jātaka Cmy. on 12.

A long talk between Gotama and Visākhā is preserved in the Anguttara Nikāya.[1] It is exceedingly interesting in that it bears the stamp of what may have been a real conversation, and has survived, not as a dialogue consisting of stereotyped question and answer, but as a talk to a laywoman, part of it as a homily. It is illustrated by homely metaphors, taken from some of the things which would be in almost daily use, such as fuller's earth, toilet stone (*sotti*), toilet powder, a boiling pot, oil, ashes, the fire, and others of a similar nature, none of which Visākhā would have been likely to omit from the successful management of her large establishment. It is probable that in conversing with her, Gotama asked her and elicited from her the different processes of cleansing; for how should he know?

As it is reported, Visākhā said that she was come from keeping the Uposatha Ceremony. She sat down as a disciple might, at one side of Gotama. Having learnt from her where she had been, he proceeded to give her the long address, which forms the substance of the conversation, on the cleansing of the mind. She is made to sit silent, as doubtless absorbed in what he was saying.

He begins by saying that the herdsmen do not keep a proper fast day, for while they are fasting their minds are running on towards to-morrow's fare. He then goes on to say that the Jains are not much better, for although pretending for a little time to be keeping the Sabbath, they all know that it is only pretence, and hence they are acting a lie.

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[1] Ang., i., 205 ff. This dialogue has several points in common with the conversation reported to have taken place between Gotama and Anāthapiṇḍika, Saṃy. Nik., xii., 5, § 41.

But the Uposatha day of the holy disciple is different; it consists of a real cleansing, of a real purification. This can only be achieved by meditating on the Buddha, the Dhamma and Sangha.[1] Meditation on the Buddha is equivalent to the cleansing of the mind; on the Dhamma to the cleansing of the body; on the Sangha to the cleansing of the clothes, for the Sangha is comparable to the clothes of the Dhamma.

In addition to this, a stained mind can be purified by contemplation on the different groups of devas, which Gotama mentions. Joy arises in the meditator as he is thinking of these things, and of the qualities which characterise the devas; for he finds that he, too, has these same qualities of devahood (faith, piety, knowledge, liberality and wisdom).

Gotama is then represented as going on to a discussion of the sīlas, the keeping of which constitutes man's proper effort, the effort of the man (*purisa*). He says: "For this day, I do as the arahans do," and he enumerates the ten observances. The last five are especially intended for the almsmen, but not as a general rule for the laity. Almsmen should abstain from (literally, take no pleasure in [*paṭivirato*, *veramaṇī*]) the occasions of eating at the wrong times; the occasions of worldly amusements, such as music, dancing and singing; the occasions of decking themselves out with garlands; the occasions of using scents and perfumes; and from the occasions of having high beds and seats. The first five sīlas,[2] the fundamental injunctions of the moral code, were intended to be observed by the almspeople and the laity alike.

The fruits and results of keeping these sīlas is heavenly bliss (*sukha*); beside this, earthly bliss, even though it were the ruling of the kingdoms of Aṅga, Magadha, Kāsī, Kosala, Vajji, Malla, Ceti, Vaṅga, Kuru, Pañcala, Maccha, Surasena, Assaka, Avanti, Gandhāra, Kamboja, would be trifling. Why? Because comparing the life-span of the devas, group by group, with the life-span of a man, Gotama shows that deva-happiness lasts very much longer as it covers a much greater period of time than does mere mortal happiness.

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[1] All of these are watchwords which came into use long after Gotama's time.

[2] See above, p. 63.

CHAPTER V (*continued*)

THE ORDER AND THE LAITY. PART III

Preaching to the laity.—Conversion by the laity.

THE effect which the life led in the Order had on the laity has been brought out to some extent in the account of Visākhā's life. The two chief ways in which the almspeople recompensed the laity for their lavish presents were by receiving alms and gifts from them, and by preaching to them. The survey of her life also brings out certain other points typical of the best relations which existed between the Order and the laity. These included the laity's not infrequent criticism of the Order; the mutual accessibility of Gotama, the almspeople and the lay-people; the absence of any appeal made to members of the laity to become almspeople; the equality of men and women, particularly with regard to their judgment and their capacity to give alms; the keeping of the Uposatha days by the laity; and the work done by the laity in making further converts. Of these, the last two matters call for further consideration.

It was impossible for the laity to live uninfluenced by the fine principles of belief and by the high ideals of life and conduct expressed both in the preaching and in the lives of the almspeople. With these they formed a corporate community; and in so far as they were prepared to adhere to the five major precepts of morality they partook of its life. By abiding by these chief moral rules which Gotama made obligatory upon all his followers, lay and religious, the outward life of the laity was brought unto partial accordance with that led by the almspeople. It was obviously impossible for the laity to adhere strictly to the third sīla. Therefore a compromise was effected: they were expected to observe it only temporarily, and at certain fixed intervals—namely, twice a month, on the days when the recluses were observing the Uposatha ceremony. This regulation of their lives, as a faint copy of that incumbent on the recluses, was sufficient to remind them of chastity as an ideal. It also emphasised the fact that the difference between the two sections of the community was a difference in degree only and not in kind. The underlying similarity of their aspirations was also borne out by the quality of the preaching. Since the doctrine was the same for all, and universal in its application, no difference between the sexes and no difference between those who followed the homeless or the household state was made in its appeal. " I have taught of Ill, of its origin, its cessation, and of the path that leads to its cessation."[1]

This was the key to Gotama's attitude, both to men and to women, whether they were in the Order or not. Therefore there was no reason why the laity should not be allowed to attend the discourses. If few sermons survive, addressed to them as such, it is not because Gotama did not recognise their importance, and did not value their adherence; but because sayings to laymen were not as interesting to monks as those to themselves. For this reason, too, although it might appear that the main part of the teaching of Gotama and his followers was directed to almsmen and almswomen who were already members of the Order, and that the instruction for conduct was, as it has survived, for almspeople and not for laity, in reality the laity were not ignored. With the exception of the three dialogues on the duties of laymen,[2] and the talk on co-residence (*saṃvāsa*) which Gotama had with some householders and their wives whom he happened to meet on the high road,[1] there is no alteration in the character of the discourses when special mention is made of the presence of the laity. They came in crowds or singly to hear the Dhamma which was preached for the understanding of everyone. No instances occur of the refusal of Gotama or his disciples to preach to the laity. On the contrary, there is deliberate mention now and again of, for example, the laywomen who approached Gotama as he was preaching,[2] and of the huge companies of laity who surrounded him,[3] perhaps seven hundred strong of lay-adherents and seven hundred laywomen adherents.[4] The population of India was very dense at those times. On another occasion it is recorded that the populace were going in their fine clothes and ornaments to the monastery to listen to the Dhamma;[5] and yet again a number of lay-brothers and sisters who were keeping a fast day came to hear the Dhamma and were seated in the Hall of Truth.[6] Wherever he was Gotama preached, and was anxious that his religious disciples should preach, no matter what threads of belief or unbelief ran through his audiences.

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[1] Majjhima, i., 431.

[2] Homilies for laymen are the Sigālôvāda Sutta, Dialogues, III., xxxi.; Mahāmangala Sutta and Dhammika Sutta, Sutta Nipāta, II., Nos. iv., xiv., *S.B.E.*, x. Of these the Sigālôvāda Sutta is regarded as

His attitude is concisely expressed in a conversation with Ānanda which he is recorded to have had when he was nearly eighty years old.[7] "I have preached the truth without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine: for in respect

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pre-eminently the Vinaya for laymen, for it stands alone as a homily addressed specifically to laymen. In Majjhima, iii., 261, one gospel for the almsmen and another for the laity are set forth by Sāriputta.

[1] Ang., ii., p. 57.

[2] *E.g.*, Therīgāthā, xxiii., xxxi., xxxv., liii., liv.

[3] *E.g.*, Saṃy. Nik., iv., 2, § 4.

[4] Saṃy. Nik., viii., § 11. Seven hundred is a figure of speech, like fifty and five hundred, meaning "crowds and crowds."

[5] Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, p. 472.

[6] Jātaka Cmy. on 511.

[7] Mhp., ch. ii., § 32.

of truths, Ānanda, the Tathāgata has no such thing as the closed fiſt of the teacher, who keeps some things back. Now the Tathāgata, Ānanda, thinks not that it is he who should lead the brotherhood, or that the Order is dependent on him." Had there been no records of laity who heard the Dhamma, a ſtatement such as this makes it impossible that he would have debarred them from this right and privilege.

It could only have been his tremendous compassion for his fellow-beings, combined with his buoyant nature that enabled him to bear the ſtrain of conſtantly living among these vaſt quantities of people, for each of whose moral and spiritual welfare he muſt have felt himself in a sense responsible. He would not have been human if the thought had never occurred to him, as it is once recorded to have done, "What if I were to live alone, remote from the crowd?" It is said that when this idea entered his mind, the Blessed One was living surrounded by a crowd of almsmen and almswomen, of male and female disciples, of kings and their miniſters as well as by heretical sects and their pupils; and he suffered annoyance and discomfort.[1] He was too human and too ſtrong to hold back from giving the Dhamma to as many people as he could, or to refuse help in countless other ways to a diversity of people. To many he was the truſted adviser on a ranging variety of topics, tiresome, difficult and profound, ethical, religious, social and physical. Because the majority of people with whom he came in contact made demands of him (as is shown by his unſtereotyped answers, each one framed to meet the needs of the individual queſtioner[2]), he was resolute in his choice to ſtay among the votaries of the religion, and accordingly dismissed the idea of living apart.

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[1] Udāna, *Meghiya*, § 5; *cf.* Ang., iv., p. 436, where it is said that this thought occurring to an almsman, who lived in the midſt of juſt such a crowd, moved him to seek a solitary life.

[2] C. A. F. Rhys Davids, *Old Creeds and New Needs*, London, 1923, p. 65.

It was not Gotama alone who preached to the laity. The work done by the almswomen in this respect has already been considered;[1] and mention has also been made of some of Ānanda's[2] and Anuruddha's[3] conversations. Other almsmen also played their part, and various records survive of the women converted by them.[4] Mahā-Kaccāna, at the request of the female lay-adherent Kālī, gave an inspiring exposition on the meaning of a verse that she is recorded to have said was uttered by Gotama.[5] A record survives of a long conversation held between the laywoman Nandamātā and Sāriputta.[6] It is said that she told him that after a prolonged mental struggle she had won to an inner peace and bliss and had escaped from the Five Fetters. Before he rose to go he is said to have taught, aroused, incited and gladdened her with talk on the Dhamma.

In all these talks and conversations Gotama and his disciples are represented as giving the Dhamma, and never as deliberately asking the laity to join the almspeople. The Way was presented, for those who could to follow; but they were not pressed to try the higher paths. They would know whether they were ripe enough to do so or not. Only if they were unaware of their latent powers, only then is Gotama said to have gone to them if he perceived that they "possessed the faculties requisite for attaining the fruit of Conversion," in order to help to ripen their budding spirituality.[7] He himself never once said that arahanship could only be reached by those who entered upon the homeless way. On the contrary, as is set out in the Commentary on the Kathā-Vatthu,[1] he is represented as having spoken the verse of the Dhammapada:[2]

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[1] See above, p. 201 ff., p. 251 ff.

[2] See above, p. 295 ff.

[3] See above, p. 336.

[4] Therīgāthā, xxvi., xxxix., xlii., xlvi.; see above, pp. 184 ff., 193, 321.

[5] Ang., v., p. 46.

[6] Ang., iv., p. 63.

[7] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 200; Therīgāthā Cmy. on lxiii., see above, p. 305.

> "Though he be finely clad, if he fare rightly,
> At peace and tamed, by right law nobly living,
> Refrain from scathe and harm to every creature;
> Noble is he, recluse is he and bhikkhu."

This is quoted to support "the belief of those who, like the Uttarāpathakas, seeing that Yasa, the clansman's son, and others attained arahanship while living amid the circumstances of secular life, judge that a layman might be an arahan."

But although a layman might *be* an arahan, the inference is that he cannot *remain* one. To be an arahan implies that he cannot continue in the practices which, as a layman, he would be carrying on. These include indulgences in sexual relations, the possession of a home and children, the wearing of wreaths and attractive clothes, the use of scents, and the keeping of animals. Gotama's answer to the Wanderer Vaccha-gotta, which appears in the Majjhima,[3] is to the effect that no "layman without shedding the trammels of house and home has at the body's dissolution made an end of ill . . ." or "got to heaven." This perhaps was realised by some lay-people. For example, Sujātā,[4] "because her intelligence was fully ripe . . . attained arahanship" while still a laywoman; but possibly fearing that she could not persist in that state while still in the world she went home and "obtained her husband's and her parents' consent, and by command of the Master was admitted to the Order of Almswomen." To make an end of Ill and to get to heaven one must shake off the fetters of the household life. It was a counsel of perfection put forward by those who prided themselves on their own adherence to the Way; and it was avidly seized and acted upon by those who felt ready to go forth and keep on the Way.

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[1] Cmy. on Kathā-Vatthu, iv., 1.

[2] Dhp., 142.

[3] Majjhima, i., 483.

[4] Therīgāthā Cmy. on liii.

In view of these records, and of the teaching given in the harem,[1] and of the dominantly and consistently exoteric attitude of Gotama, it is difficult to account for the pācittiya ruling which made it an offence for almsmen to preach the Dhamma to women.[2] It is likely that this pācittiya offence, instituted owing to the complaints of the pious almsmen, is a later interpolation of the editors, and had no place in the initial spreading of the Dhamma. It shows both the debased position into which women had again fallen, no less than the nervous apprehension of the monk-editors; for a contributory, if not the sole cause of the prohibition, was that Udāyi recited the Dhamma to women in a low voice.[3] The editors feared the potential dangers to which they imagined such proximity might lead. At all events the ruling could not stand as it was, exclusive, and from the women's point of view, obstructionist. Though anxious to learn, but yet unable to hear the teaching, how could they begin to reach the very topmost height[4] to which, time and again, the Fourfold Congregation was urged to aspire ? The records go straight on to say that one of the laywomen begged Udāyi to give them the Dhamma in five or six words, and became angry and complained because he would not relent. The wrath of the laity, even of the laywomen, had to be reckoned with, and their vexation had to be smoothed down whenever it had been excited. Hence a compromise was arranged, and it was said that they were allowed to be taught the Dhamma in not more than six words. Nothing more fatuous or useless than this, poles apart from Gotama's own sense and wisdom, could well be imagined.

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[1] See below, p. 372 ff.

[2] V., iv., pp. 20, 21.

[3] V., iv., p. 21 ; *cf.* Ang., iii., p. 259.

[4] Mhp., ch. ii., § 35.

This ruling stands alone, for the other documentary evidence shows that as the Dhamma was preached to the laity of both sexes, it bore fruit. With the keen interest in religious discussion, theory and practice, which has marked Indian peoples throughout the ages, the lay-votaries of the Buddhist religion expended themselves in handing on their new-found beliefs to their friends. It soon became clear that the power of gaining converts was not relegated to the Order alone, but that the laity, by the diligence with which they engaged upon this work, substantially increased the number of the adherents of the religion which they supported. In order to give a proportionate view of the influence of the Order on the laity, some account must be given of the work of conversion which stands to the laity's credit. It will then be seen that this influence did not only react in the manifold sphere of interest taken by the laity in the Order, part of which was self-seeking in character; but that it also reacted on the outside world. In both fields of activity the laity were animated by admiration of the Dhamma taught by Gotama.

An original element in Buddhism, as opposed to Brahmanism, was that its converts were drawn from all castes.[1] Membership of it was not the hereditary privilege of one caste, and therefore the work of preaching had to be deliberately undertaken. Examples of converts made by almswomen are not far to seek.[2] Laywomen also were of great assistance in furthering the spread of the Dhamma. For example, it is said that Cullā Subhaddā, Anāthapiṇḍika's daughter, then married and living at Ugga, by extolling the glorious virtues of the Buddha, awakened in her mother-in-law a desire to see the Teacher. When he discerned this he went to Ugga and converted first Subhaddā's father-in-law, the great merchant Ugga, and so many other people besides, that from that time on the city of Ugga was a faithful, believing city.[1]

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[1] See above, p. 167 ff.

[2] For some examples, see above, p. 201 ff.

The influence of queens who were converted to the faith was in many cases so powerful that it must be treasured up in computing the share taken by women in shedding the light of the doctrine and discipline. Manifestly Buddhism would not have become the force that it did, had it not been for the part which they so devotedly played.

King Udena was converted through his queen Sāmāvatī,[2] who herself had been converted by Khujjuttarā, one of her female slaves; and King Pasēnadi of Kosala was converted by Mallikā, one of his queens.[3] She appears to have been converted at the end of a conversation which she had with Gotama. She had approached him in the Jetavana Grove, and they had talked of the reasons why women are rich or poor, well or badly off, and in the possession of great power or the reverse.[4] When the talk was over she asked to be allowed to take her refuge in him as a lay-adherent from that day forth. Later, presumably, she greatly interested the King by her accounts of Gotama's teaching on the sorrow and tribulation which their dear ones bring to men and women; in order completely to sweep away all his doubts, she sent a special message to Gotama for a corroboration of this assertion.[5] Pasēnadi then came to believe that in people there is no refuge: instead a refuge must be sought in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. A king had great influence in his territory. Thus if he became a Buddhist, the spread of the Dhamma would be facilitated and accelerated; the religion of Gotama would take on the character of a state-religion, for most of the common people would imitate the King's venture.

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[1] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 304.

[2] *Ibid.* on verses 21-23.

[3] Majjhima, ii., 106-112.

[4] Ang., ii., pp. 202-205.

[5] Majjhima, ii., 106-112.

THE ORDER AND THE LAITY. PART III

One of the most notable features following in the wake of the new religion was the disuse of sacrifices. According to Keith,[1] the human sacrifice, although finding no direct support in the Brāhmaṇas, and being possibly a very late conception, was yet permitted by them, not as suicide, but as substitution for oneself. According to some of the other doctrines, it was supposed that the god needed sacrifices for his sustenance. A teaching without a god could not logically claim a sacrifice, and a complete avowal of *ahiṃsā* could not support it. Gotama therefore condemned human and animal sacrifice.[2] Pure and wise beings shun the great sacrifices of men and horses, as they bring pain and no merit, no less than those where multitudes of sheep, goats and cows perish. They seek rather those sacrifices and offerings to worthy men, which, because they involve no pain are of far higher value. Homage paid to the wise man for one moment is better than sacrifice for a hundred years; as reverence paid to a righteous man is better than a whole year's sacrifice in order to obtain merit.[3]

Queen Mallikā set a noble example by decrying animal sacrifice. She derided it to King Pasēnadi on account of its stupidity and uselessness:[4] " Where did you hear of one man's saving his life by the death of another ? Just because a stupid Brahmin told you to, is that any reason why you should overwhelm the populace with suffering ?" Thoroughly to convince him, she took him to Gotama. His explanations of the omens of Pasēnadi's dreams differed from those given by the Brahmins, but appealed to him because of their very reasonableness. Accordingly he released from their bonds all the animals which he had collected for the sacrifice. Men and women, realising that their liberation was due to the intervention of Mallikā, praised her virtues, saying: "Long live our gracious Queen Mallikā, through whom their lives were spared."[1]

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[1] Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, p. 460.

[2] *E.g.*, Ang., ii., pp. 42-44; *cf.* Jātaka, 542, where the king contemplated the sacrifice of his queens, sons and daughters. Deterred by the lamentations of his relatives, he set his heart on the sacrifice of his eldest son, but was thwarted in this too.

[3] Dhp., 106-108.

[4] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 60; and *cf.* Jātaka Cmy. on 77, where however Mallikā does not play such a leading part.

This is not all that Mallikā did for the Order and the laity. Once when Gotama and five hundred almsmen returned from an alms-pilgrimage to the Jetavana, Pasēnadi and his citizens competed in presenting him with gifts.[2] Pasēnadi was cast down because the citizens bid fair to outdo him in lavishness, but Mallikā thought of "gifts beyond compare," beyond their subjects' means and imagination to present. She certainly was a devoted adherent of the Dhamma and of the Order, however much in the tolerant way of the East she may also have entertained Wanderers belonging to other sects.[3] Many of the benefactions which the Order received were due to her initiative and to that of her convert King.

It was later recorded that she had done an "act of devotion which bare fruit even in this life,"[4] for once "when a poor flower-girl" she "gave the last night's gruel (she had reserved for her own dinner) to the Blessed One. She became that very day the chief queen of the King of Kosala."[5]

In the Vinaya,[6] it is recorded that Pasēnadi one day went into his park and found a lay-disciple in attendance upon Gotama. Pasēnadi is said to have asked the layman to go and recite the Dhamma in the women's quarters. But the layman replied: "Sire, what I know is only by conveyance of Their Reverences (*i.e.*, at second-hand from the almsmen). They will recite it in Your Majeſty's harem." "True," said Pasēnadi, and he asked Gotama if an almsman might be deputed to give the Dhamma in the women's quarters. Gotama inſtructed Ānanda to undertake this task. The ſtory goes on to say that on one occasion Mallikā saw this disciple coming from afar, as she was reſting on her couch and flirting with King Pasēnadi. She got up with a smile to welcome him and at the same time her yellow burnished covering dropped off. Ānanda fled and told the other almsmen. They chided him, and repeated to him the ten court dangers arising from entering into the King's palace:[1] the firſt being a smile exchanged between an almsman and the chief queen. It was then made a pācittiya offence for an almsman to go before he was summoned into the King's inner quarters if the King had not left, or if the Queen, the royal treasure (*ratana*) as she is frequently ſtyled, had not come forth.

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[1] Dhp. Cmy. on 60.

[2] *Ibid.* on verse 177.

[3] Majjhima, ii., 22; Dialogues, vol. i., 178.

[4] Milindapañha, iv., 1, 37.

[5] *Ibid.*, iv., 8, 25.

[6] V., iv., pp. 157-168.

The ſtory appears again in the Dhammapada Commentary,[2] slightly differing in detail. Mallikā is here represented as sending a message through Pasēnadi to Gotama requeſting him to go to their mansion regularly with five hundred almsmen, and preach the Dhamma to her and Vāsabhakhattiyā, one of his other consorts. Pasēnadi had previously asked Chaṭṭapāni, the learned lay-disciple, to teach them; but he had said that it was improper for laymen to go into the women's quarters, and a "censurable act for householders to go about performing the functions of the almsmen." Gotama was unable to bind himself to go regularly to any one place, but he agreed to let Ānanda go and "recite the Dhamma to those queens." He reported that Mallikā made an excellent pupil.

In the Jātaka Commentary it is ſtated that the ladies asked particularly to be taught by Ānanda.

What muſt be regarded as a continuation of the story appears in another part of the Vinaya,[1] and it is repeated in a Jātaka Commentary.[2] In the Vinaya the King's name is given as Udena. In the Jātaka Commentary it is not given. The events referred to are evidently supposed to have taken place later than those described above, for here Ānanda was fully recognised as the ladies' preceptor. In the Vinaya the scene is laid in the park, and the queens, hearing that he, their teacher, was at the foot of a tree, asked the King if they might go to him for their instruction. In the Jātaka Commentary it is stated that Ānanda had been preaching to the ladies of the King of Kosala's palace, as is described above,[3] that is in the mansion.

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[1] These are repeated at Ang. v., p. 323, but no ſtory is given.

[2] Dhp. Cmy. on verses 54-55; *cf.* Jātaka Cmy. on 92.

Both these later narratives develop into an account of the blame incurred by Ānanda for receiving the gift of five hundred robes from the queens. He exculpated himself by explaining to the King in a far-sighted and highly satisfactory way how he could make use of them.

One example of Mallikā's penetration of the teaching has been preserved in the Saṃyutta Nikāya;[4] it is repeated in the Udāna.[5] It is in the form of an illuminating conversation which is said to have taken place between her and Pasēnadi, the theme being the love of the self (*atta*). It is quite free from the irrational denial of the self that later became part of the monkish teaching. This has often buried or distorted Gotama's real meaning,[6] and hence has done much to damage it by perpetuating false views on his teaching. Mallikā and Pasēnadi agreed that to each there is nothing dearer than his or her own soul (*atta*).

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[1] CV., xi., 1. 13, 14.

[2] Jātaka Cmy. on 157 ; *cf. ibid.* on 259.

[3] *I.e.*, in Jātaka 92.

[4] Saṃy. Nik., iii., 1, § 8.

[5] Udāna, *Sona Thera*, v., § 1.

[6] *E.g.*, MV., i., 14, 3 : "Now what think you, young man ? which would be better for you ; that you should go in search of a woman, or that you should go in search of yourselves ?"

Pasēnadi repeated this talk to Gotama, who uttered the following verse (*udāna*):

"The whole world wide we traverse without thought,
And nothing find more dear to man than soul.
Since aye so dear the soul to others is,
Let the soul-lover harm no other man."[1]

A mastery of the niceties of the rule to be observed by the almsmen is revealed by the following story.[2] Royalty as much as other laity had a right to complain of the conduct of the almsmen and almswomen if it appeared to them to be unseemly. On this occasion seventeen almsmen[3] were sporting in the river Aciravatī, and Pasēnadi and Mallikā saw them from the terrace of their mansion. Pasēnadi said: "Those are holy men (*arahanto*) sporting in the water." She replied: "Surely this has not been made permissible by the Lord?" The royal couple then devised a plan for letting Gotama know that some of his followers were behaving in such an unbecoming way. Calling the almsmen up to them, they sent a kind of ball by them to Gotama. As they presented it to him and he perceived that they were wet, he asked them where the King had seen them; and evidently took the hint that the ball was intended to convey: that the almsmen had been kicking up the water. He is recorded to have rebuked them for this frivolous behaviour.

Mallikā's fervour would doubtless have compelled her to teach the Dhamma to her multitudinous women attendants, and to the young women of noble and brahmin families who were in the royal court and over whom she reigned as queen.[4] Her activities on behalf of the religion lay in learning and teaching the Dhamma; in securing converts; in making criticisms for the more appropriate behaviour of the almsmen and almswomen; and in supporting them in various ways, including presumably the giving of meritorious gifts to the Sangha as she had promised.[1]

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[1] *Cf.* Saṃy. Nik., i., 2, § 3: "Naught love we as we love the inner self (*atta*)."

[2] V., iv., p. 111-112.

[3] This, and V., iv., p. 41, are the only mention of this number of almsmen. It hence looks as if the account were historic. There were also the seventeen boy-companions of Upāli, who all sought their parents' leave to enter the Order, V., iv., p. 128.

[4] Ang., ii., pp. 202-205.

Another queen who was influential in the spread of Buddhism was Khemā,[2] the chief consort of King Bimbisāra of Magadha. Unlike Sāmāvatī and Mallikā, who converted their husbands, she on the contrary was converted by hers.

She became very popular, and would therefore have had much sway in her home country of the Maddas, being a native of Sāgala,[3] and also in her adopted country of Magadha. She joined the Order of Almswomen, and became especially famous for her great insight.[4]

Yet it was not only queens who were able to make converts. The business of conversion was not merely a hobby of the royal harems, but was zealously entered upon by women of all classes. While the great of the land secured many converts, the humbler worked away in their more circumscribed spheres, all contributing to the astonishing cumulative result. As has been already said Visākhā was the means of converting her father-in-law and mother-in-law.[5] Through the influence of Dhanañjānī,[1] a staunch believer in the Buddha and his doctrine and the Confraternity, although a brahmin lady of highly aristocratic birth, a young brahmin, Sangārava, was brought to listen to Gotama. The visit ended, as was invariably the way with such instruction, in his conversion.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 203, *anna-pāna-vattha-yāna-mālā-gandhā-vilepana-seyyāvasatha-padīpeyya*, *cf.* Saṃy. Nik., xxxi., § 13; iii., 3, § 1. It is interesting to note that chariots (*yāna*) and perfume (*gandhā*) are included in this list. Use of both these things came to be a pācittiya offence, the former at V., iv., pp. 338, 339, where *yāna* is described in the Cmy. as a vehicle, portable bed, litter, chariot, wagon, sedan-chair; the latter at V., iv., p. 341. *Cf.* also Saṃy. Nik., i., 5, § 2: "And he it is who gives happiness who giveth vehicles," which according to the Cmy. includes all means to move or to be moved about: elephants, etc.; and such things as umbrellas, sandals, walking sticks, palanquins . . . mending of roads, making of stairways, causeways . . . ships."

[2] Therīgāthā, lii.; Apadāna, ii., p. 543 ff., Therīapadāna, No. 18.

[3] *Psalms of the Sisters*, note 1, p. 48.

[4] See above, pp. 167, 168.

[5] See above, pp. 348, 349.

Another story tells of how she was the means of sending her husband to listen to Gotama.[2] She had aggravated him past bearing by always " speaking the praises of that shaveling friar," and he in a fury declared that he would go off and give him a piece of his mind. Dhanañjānī acquiesced. Her faith in the outcome of this visit was justified by the results, for her husband soon afterwards attained arahanship.

The story of the woman known as Punabbasu's mother[3] shows that an alert-minded mother could bring up her children to appreciate the Dhamma. " With daughter on hip and boy's hand in hers " they listened all together to Gotama as he was preaching on the subject of kinsfolk being no refuge. Both mother and son found it " sweet to listen to the Norm." As the boy was evidently older than Uttarā, his sister, he probably understood it earlier than she did. For she was too young as yet; but her mother would see to her instruction: " Thou too, my Uttarā, listen to me."

A believing lay-sister when rightly admonishing her son[4] should tell him if he is going into the homeless life to emulate Sāriputta and Moggallāna, and her daughter[5] to emulate Khemā and Uppalavaṇṇā. Mothers are sometimes found encouraging their sons to enter the Order, and sometimes mourning because they did so and trying to dissuade them.[1] The distraction of Sānu's mother[2] when she found that he had left the Order is proof of the value in which she held it. So much confidence did the mother of Prince Bodhi place in the Order that she dedicated her unborn baby, whether male or female, to it.[3] But cases of the dedication of either an unborn child or of a young one are rare. Choice to join was usually left in the power of the individual, with certain restrictions, as appears from the attitude of the mother of Tissa.[4] He told her that he wished to become an almsman under the Elder Sāriputta. "Very well, my dear son," she replied. "Long ago I decided not to interfere with the inclination of my son. Become an almsman, my son." Accedence to children's wishes or the refusal of them was one of the ways in which the laity might help or hinder the increase of the Order.

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[1] Majjhima, ii., 209, 210. Dhanañjānī was a friend of Sumedhā when Koṇāgamana was Buddha. *Psalms of the Sisters*, verse 518; p. 177, note 2.

[2] Samy. Nik., vii., 1, § 1.

[3] Saṃy. Nik., x., § 7. This woman is called a *yakkhinī*, meaning perhaps a sort of gypsy, a Dravidian or Kolarian aboriginal (such as are even now the Todas.)

[4] Saṃy. Nik., xvii., 3, § 23 (3); Ang., i., p. 88.

[5] Saṃy. Nik., xvii., 3, § 24 (4); Ang., i., p. 88.

The presence of the almsmen and almswomen among the laity must have diffused influences which, to a large extent, were mutually beneficial. On the one hand, transmission of the ideals and tenets of the religion would occur during the daily intercourse as surely as it would occur during the preaching on the Dhamma. On the other hand, the sympathy of the laity with this new religion, and with the almspeople who were able to live out its teaching more fully than they, may be computed by their perpetual liberality in giving the four requisites of an almsman's life; by their willingness to give shelter to the almspeople when they were on tour; by their keeping of the Uposatha days; and by the magnitude of their work in gaining converts.

These ceaseless tributes from the laity are proof that, in their eyes, all veneration paid to the almspeople was deserved. With all shades of religious belief to choose from, and with generations of religious speculation behind them, they deemed that the teaching of Gotama was worthy to be followed, and that the almspeople were worthy to follow it. Had the people not been appreciative, the development of the religion would not have spread so rapidly from members of the Order to members of the laity, and from them to other members, as yet "heretics." This work of conversion, the result of conversations and discourses, was kept active and fresh by the faith instilled by the Teacher into the almspeople, and by the conviction the laity themselves came to hold, that among the many-folk there was a real yearning to know and to follow "the Dhamma, sublime and excellent for men,"[1] a longing enshrined in the cry: "Teach us the Dhamma! There will be some who will understand."[2]

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[1] Jātaka, 460.

[2] Saṃy. Nik., x., § 5.

[3] Majjhima, ii., 97.

[4] Dhp. Cmy. on verse 75.

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[1] Saṃy. Nik., vi., 1, § 1.

[2] Majjhima, i., 169; Saṃy. Nik., vi., 1, § 1.

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